SOVIET PHILOSOPHY

A Study of Theory and Practice

By

JOHN SOMERVILLE, Ph.D.

Columbia University Cutting Traveling Fellow in the U.S.S.R.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
ALLAHABAD

PHILOSOPHICAL LIBRARY

NEW YORK • 1946

COPYRIGHT, 1946, BY
THE PHILOSOPHICAL LIBRARY
15 EAST 40TH STREET, NEW YORK 15, N. Y.

TO ROSE

With the hope that some day there may be people who will look back with amusement on present fears for the survival of mankind.

PREFACE

What is the philosophy basic to the Soviet regime? This book tries to give an answer to that question. In order to write it, I learned Russian, and spent almost two years in the Soviet Union with no other function or purpose than to make observations, gather materials, study documents unobtainable here, talk with leading thinkers and ordinary people, and, in short, do and obtain whatever might throw light on Soviet philosophy in theory and practice.

So far as I know, no other scholar has ever gone to the U.S.S.R. with this kind of mission in the field of philosophy, in spite of the vast importance of the subject, both in the practical terms of international relations, and the scholarly terms of exploration at the foundations of a new culture.

Since this appears to be the first book attempting to cover the subject, it is appropriate that it should be an exposition of Soviet philosophy, not a polemic against it. If there ever was a subject on which we have had too much heat and too little light, it is this one. What do the Soviet Russians really believe? So far everyone has been so anxious to agree or disagree with them that no one seems to have taken the trouble to sum up their beliefs as a whole.

Some people will probably read this book, not to find out how much accurate or useful information there may be in it, but how much "sympathy" for the Soviet Union. They will undoubtedly find what they are looking for. I have tried to make the book true to the content and meaning of a living philosophy as it is found among those who live by it. If that sort of thing is not done with a certain amount of "sympathy," it cannot be

done at all. It is that kind of task. People who say they want to understand the Soviet Union, but will not examine an exposition of its philosophy, are deluding themselves.

There is, of course, a place for polemics. In the end, every human being has the right—perhaps even the duty—to raise the question: do I agree or disagree? To what extent do I agree or disagree? And there naturally will be a variety of conflicting answers. But it should be carefully noticed, and given the sharpest emphasis in passing, that the only question which we in America, *as a sovereign state*, are morally obligated to raise in our international relations is: can we live in peace with this philosophy? I am suggesting we have no moral right to fight people because their philosophy is different from ours, except if it is a philosophy advocating military aggression as a deliberately chosen value, as a desirable form of self-expression. For example, it is impossible to study the philosophy of nazism and fascism without realizing that it is exactly of that character. Soviet philosophy is not. In my judgment, those two truths underlie all other truths in the field of international relations in the atomic age. The clarification of them represents the most direct contribution philosophy can make to the continuity of the human race.

No one book can exhaust the subject of Soviet thought. Each aspect here treated should be, and I hope will be developed in a series of volumes. However, the basic need, especially in a first book, is for a comprehensive picture, which brings within one focus and frame of reference all the principal parts, even though each be treated with necessary brevity.

Soviet scholars are among the most hospitable and generous in the world. I wish especially to express my thanks to the Academy of Sciences for the permission freely given to observe and use its materials as I pleased, and to its officials for their toleration of the perpetual inquisitor I must have seemed. For example, after I felt sure of myself in the interplay of philosophic

discussion in Russian, I made out a list of some half dozen of the outstanding scholars in the different branches of philosophy, and requested interviews. Each responded with the utmost willingness and spoke with complete candor. There was between us that bond that exists between students of philosophy anywhere in the world: familiarity with the towering systems and the basic issues of human thought, and a professional pride in ferreting out ultimate commitments. I put to them every embarrassing question I could think of, after careful preparation. I cannot say they were always answered to my satisfaction, but I must say they were never evaded.

My greatest good fortune was that Rose Maurer Somerville was the companion of my journeyings over the spaces of the earth, among its peoples, and within the stubborn realities of fascinating and exacting ideas. Whatever faults the book has, it would have been far worse had it not benefited by her advice and criticism, based on a knowledge of contemporary Russian society possessed by few other scholars in America today.

I wish to record my deep sense of gratitude to Columbia University and the William Bayard Cutting Traveling Fellowships which made possible my research project, and especially to the late Dean of the Graduate Faculties, Frederick J. E. Woodbridge, and the present Executive Officer of the Department of Philosophy, Professor Herbert W. Schneider, who supported it.

All translations from works cited by Russian title are mine unless otherwise noted. I acknowledge with thanks permission granted by the editors of *The American Slavic and East European Review* and *The Philosophical Review* to include in Chapters IV and VII material from my articles in their journals.

J. S.

New York City

CONTENTS

PREFACE ix

PART I · SOCIAL OUTLOOK

CHAPTER

I BASIC PERSPECTIVE: THE THEORY OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM 3

The Problem—What is Meant by Class and Class Struggle—Value under Capitalism and Socialism—Classes in the Soviet Union—The Class Struggle in Cultural Fields—How Society Progresses—The Morality of Revolution—Summary—Role of the Individual in History—In What Direction Is History Moving?—Capitalism and Socialism—Socialism and Communism.

II POLITICAL LIFE: SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT 42

Lenin on Democracy—When Is a Country Democratic?—Democracy and Economics—Democracy and Education—Democracy and Race Problems—Democracy and the Problems of Women—Democracy and Political Problems—Capitalist and Socialist Ideas of Freedom—The Soviet and Fascist Concepts of Freedom—State and Totalitarianism—The Question of Religious Freedom.

III SOVIET ETHICS: SOCIALIST HUMANISM 84

Bourgeois and Socialist Humanism—Ethics and Classes—The Relative and the Absolute in Ethics—Ethics and the Inevitability of Victory—Means and Ends—Are Spiritual Values Denied?—Materialist Attitude towards Death—The Soviet Approach to Sex Problems—Prostitution—

CHAPTER

Sex in the Popular Arts—Individualism, Socialism and the Individual.

IV THE ARTS: SOCIALIST REALISM 116

Esthetics and the Philosophy of Art—What Is Art?—Art and the Class Struggle—The Artist and Social Reality—Attitude towards the Great Art of the Past—Lenin's View of Tolstoy—Criteria in Judging Art—Art and Labor—Form and Content—Socialist Art in the U.S.S.R.—Nationalism and Internationalism in Soviet Art—Optimism and Pessimism—Revolutionary Romanticism—Naturalism and Formalism.

PART II · WORLD VIEW

V OUR UNIVERSE: GENERAL THEORY OF DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM 149

Marxism Is Not Only a Social Philosophy—General Traits of the Materialist World View—What Does Materialism Mean?—What Does Dialectical Mean?—Evidence for Dialectical Materialism—Three Universal Laws—Our Evolving Universe.

VI THE HUMAN MIND: THE DIALECTICAL METHOD OF THINKING 178

The Issue between Materialist Dialectics and Formal Logic as to the Method of Correct Thinking—The Laws of Thought—The Greatness of Aristotle—What Is Dialectical Thinking?—Materialist Dialectics and Science—Specialization and Integration—Dialectical Rules for Thinking.

VII PIVOTAL CONTROVERSIES IN THE HISTORY OF SOVIET PHILOSOPHY 213

Rejection of Mechanistic Materialism—The Position of Bukharin—Rejection of "Menshevising Idealism"—Philosophic Theory and Social Practice.

CHAPTER

VIII DISSEMINATION OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE U.S.S.R. 229

Methods of Bringing Soviet Philosophy to the People—Philosophy Teaching: Curriculum—Methods of Teaching and Study—The Issue of Freedom in Teaching and Study—The Organization of Philosophy Research.

IX ABOUT READING 249

General World View—Social Philosophy—Philosophy of Art—Encyclopedias.

INDEX 263

Part I

SOCIAL OUTLOOK

CHAPTER I

BASIC PERSPECTIVE: THE THEORY OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

THE PROBLEM

It is well known that Soviet Philosophy is based historically on the work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and that its strongest emphasis is on social considerations. Therefore, the first question to raise is, what is the basic Marxian social theory? It is called historical materialism—*historical* because it is a theory of history, that is, of human society historically changing; *materialism* because of its emphasis on economic factors and natural causes to explain the history of human society so far. To relate key terms for a moment, the theory of historical materialism is one part of Soviet philosophy, which, as a whole, is called dialectical materialism. The meaning of this formidable looking term we shall examine in detail later. Here we are concerned with historical materialism considered as the specifically *social* philosophy within dialectical materialism.

This part of Marxian philosophy has always been the most widely known—and misknown. There has arisen in connection with it a whole series of misconceptions to which even the most careful scholars have sometimes fallen a victim. One such is that this philosophy has no other part, no theory of the universe, no theory of mind, no ethics, no esthetics. Another is that historical materialism has nothing to do with philosophy, but is merely a narrowly conceived political program. Still another is that it is based upon a denial of all cultural and "spiritual" values.

In short, it has been one of the most maltreated theories in the history of philosophy. Cicero once remarked that there is nothing so absurd that it will not be found in the books of one of the philosophers. In modern days his *mot* might be paraphrased to read, there is nothing so absurd that it has not been attributed by some philosopher to historical materialism. In truth, it is a theory that has been refuted more frequently than it has been studied.

In order better to understand this branch of dialectical materialism, let us first inquire into the problems which it attempts to solve, the questions to which it is the answer. Some of them have to do with society or human history as a whole, others with a single society or nation. To what basic factors can we trace the origin, development and decline of societies, cultures, nations? What are the chief causal agencies in the movement of human history, the evolution of human society? What is the general direction of this movement or evolution? What fundamental relationships, are found among the chief institutions making up any society? Such questions may be raised and such terms used in different senses. The sense in which we find them operative in this philosophy will grow clear as we proceed.

Man does not just live; he "makes" his living, and as he makes it, so he lives. The most important sense in which this is true is not in relation to the individual, (although it is seen there also) but collectively speaking. An individual man may "live well," or consider that he does so, without "making" his own living, but he never escapes the influence, direct as well as indirect, of how his living is made for him. For he stands in a certain relationship to those who make it, a relationship that maintains its effect, as powerful as it is pervasive, not only so long as he chooses to think about it, or act consciously in the light of it, but just so long as he goes on living in that particular fashion. Apples are not subject to gravitation only when they fall to the ground. In like fashion, a man is not a tenant only

when he pays the rent, nor is a landlord such only when he collects it. Every human being save perhaps Robinson Crusoe, is a vital center of a network of indispensable economic relationships radiating in every direction, a network which is as sensitive as it is strong, which connects him with the collective of which he is a part. Without some such network the human individual can no more live in society (and we may disregard those, if there are any, who live outside of society), than he can live without a heart and its accompanying system of arteries and veins. It is held, in other words, that society at large makes man's social life what it is by virtue of the productive system on which it is necessarily based. Granted that the individual is given the functioning biological equipment of his species at birth, it would be difficult indeed to find anything which has more influence on the whole subsequent course of his life than the way, broadly taken, in which he makes his living; as regards a civilization or nation, it would be even more difficult.

Now why does any particular society have the legally sanctioned ways of making a living, that is, the system of economic relationships (of ownership, employment, exchange, renting, and the like) that it does have? First of all, in this view, because of the kind of productive forces at its disposal, the type of technics and tools which it possesses, and the kind of resources of nature, such as land, waters, metals, coal, and the like, in and through which the tools and instrumentalities operate. There can be no factory system without the type of machinery that makes factories possible. On the other hand, once that type of machinery is brought into existence, factories will spring up, and, such has been the course of history, the factory "system." Whenever there is an opportunity to gain by the improvement of tools or resources in use, or by the invention of new tools, or the discovery of new resources, an attempt will probably be made to take advantage of that opportunity, and, what is of major significance, the new productive forces may make neces-

sary new economic relationships. In any case the system of economic relationships must, at any given moment, be such as to permit the use of the type of forces prevalent. Otherwise, either the forces could not be used or the relationships could not be maintained. For example, the manorial pattern of economic relationships (entail, primogeniture, agricultural serfdom) would offer so many obstacles to the running of modern steel mills that one or the other would have to give way.

Basic in the whole situation is the *specific character* of the forces of production. This is something which permits, encourages, and, under given conditions, necessitates a system of economic relations of a *specific character.* (It is well to note that there always are "given conditions," that is, conditions given by the past history of the human race and the point of development it has reached at any particular time. Not mere possibilities, but historical actualities are in question.) As the technics change, the relations in which men stand to them, and to one another in respect to them, also change. In other words, society has a history. This history is not a simple, nor, unfortunately, has it so far been a peaceful affair. Human society has not been a harmonious entity governed by that eye of wisdom which always discerns the good of the whole. The adjustments of the system of economic relationships to changes in the technical base have been accompanied by severe struggles, which have been by no means confined to the physical level. It is understandable that in any society where private ownership of the productive forces is accepted, certain individuals or groups of individuals acquire a vested interest in the type of technics and resources prevailingly utilized, an interest which is canalized and expressed in terms of the legally protected system of economic relationships. Naturally these people do not look with favor upon such changes of technics or resources as would take control out of their hands. By the same token, technical changes which would shift control to a radically different group (not

merely in the sense of different individuals, but of a different economic type, as in the shift from an agricultural to an industrial economy) could be introduced only by challenging and sweeping away the old legal structure. What takes place is a certain contest between groups and among individuals, to use a synonym for the class struggle.

WHAT IS A CLASS AND WHAT IS THE CLASS STRUGGLE?

The focal thought is that history moves onwards through struggles over the forces of production. It need hardly be pointed out that they are worth struggling for. Who controls these controls much. Being indispensable to life, they generate issues over which men are willing to die. It is common to find wars, revolutions, social upheavals, great movements and contests that mold civilization springing from the effort to gain or maintain control of the forces of production. It would indeed be very strange if such were not the case, considering all that is involved.

It is clear that the struggles thus generated are not, in their essence, between individuals, any more than the warfare of armies is. Both involve individual combat and might be thought, superficially, to involve nothing more. But wider observation discovers the broad lines of consolidation and alliance. There are large camps which unite their followers in a common interest. In the social struggle this interest is a common relationship to the means of production. Class is the name given to a group possessing such a relationship. Class struggle is the term applied to conflicts into which such people are drawn on account of their economic relationships.

Before we can come to terms with what is involved in the class struggle, we must make an effort to clear away all sorts of commonly held misconceptions. For example, whether or not we belong to a certain class has no more to do with our *aware-*

ness of it than whether we are at a certain latitude and longitude or of a certain height and weight depends upon an awareness of those facts. As the term has always been defined in Marxian thought, we belong to a certain class because we exercise the functions of that class, and we must exercise those functions because of our relationship to the means of production. If we happen to own some of these—for example, a plant or factory, we must employ workers, sell the product, pay taxes and make a profit. If we do not do these things, we shall soon cease to be "in business." So long as we wish to remain in business there are certain inexorable limitations within which we must act. The factory wage laborer could not, except in imagination, consummate the economic acts of the owner, who, in turn, could not, except manually, play the part of the wage laborer.

Perhaps it would be well to pause a little longer on the concept of a class. What kind of "common relationship to the means of production" is in question? Primarily, a relationship in respect to control, ownership or use of them. The thousands of manufacturers, financiers, large ranch farmers or plantation owners, builders, owners of utilities, mine owners, mill owners, and all sorts of "capitalists" have many points of difference, but they all have this complex of circumstances in common: they own the means of production and hire others to work upon them. In like manner, those so hired have many points of difference, but have in common this basic situation, that they work upon, but do not own the means of production, and that their tenure of employment is dependent upon how long the conditions of the private market permit the private owner to make a private profit out of their labor. There are, of course, individuals who belong partly to one such class and partly to another, as, for instance, a skilled mechanic employed in a large automobile plant who has invested his savings and, directly or indirectly, own shares of stock in his own or some other corpora-

tion. In most of such cases, it would not be difficult to decide in which class the greater proportion of economic interests functioned. It would usually be decided by the simple question from which side the bulk of his earnings came. If, in some cases, class membership seemed about equally divided, then it would not make any particular difference, so far as this point in itself is concerned, in which class the individual was placed.

Moreover, as Soviet thinkers point out, there are some individuals who, from a strictly economic point of view, belong to no class, although they become attached, by virtue of other activities, to one class or another. Such, for instance, are the "intellectuals" and professional people like writers, engineers, teachers, lawyers, doctors, accountants and artists, as well as clerical, service and maintenance personnel. These people work, not directly with the means of production, but with ideas, records, documents and various sorts of contributory equipment.

The term, forces of production, as we have seen, means the tools, instruments, resources and facilities which are directly utilized in the process of making consumption goods (or production goods, such as more tools, machinery and the like)—goods which figure as commodities on the market. Plants, factories, the various kinds of machines and tools, the land, fisheries, mines, power sources of all kinds, including human labor power, are all forces of production. The system of private capitalism is historically distinguished by the extent to which it makes it possible for private individuals to buy all these things and thus manage production for a private profit market. People who do this in a large way constitute the capitalist class. Workers in general possess at least one of the forces of production—their own labor power. It is clear, however, that this is not enough to become a capitalist. The vast mass of workers who do not own the other forces of production, and who work upon them for wages paid by those who do own them constitute the work-

ing class. In its strict sense, the term proletariat is used to designate the industrial working class.

VALUE UNDER CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM

We may note at this point the origin of "surplus value" and "exploitation." These concepts, originally developed by Marx and Engels, are based on the labor theory of value, which was systematically expounded by Marx, but which, as he indicates, was worked out more or less completely, by many other preceding thinkers.

The question which any theory of value tries to answer is: what basically determines the economic value, expressed by average price, of any commodity on the market? The solution offered by this theory is that such value is basically determined by the average amount of labor time which it is necessary for normally qualified workers to expend in order to produce the commodity in question.

The proletarian is in the position of selling his labor power for a certain wage. During his working day, he must create more value than is contained in the sum of his wages. Otherwise, there would be no possibility of profit (as distinguished from salary paid for executive work) for the employer. This extra value is called surplus value. Insofar as it is the source of private profit in addition to socially necessary benefits and reserves, the worker producing it is being "exploited" in the sense that he does not receive in return the full amount of what he has created. The socialist reasons that since natural resources as such are nature's gift to human kind and all tools are the product of labor, it would be more ethical, and production would be more efficiently managed in the over-all sense of long time planning, if ownership of the forces of production were collectivized. Under such an arrangement private profit is eliminated and workers receive, either directly as wages, or indirectly

as social benefits, the full value of what they create. There would be no group of people who make money by buying low and selling high, or by hiring and discharging workers in accordance with the fluctuations of a market geared to private profit. Soviet thinkers take the position that the existence of the Soviet Union is evidence that an economic system can operate without the necessity of such phenomena as capitalists, private profits, and unemployment. When well meaning visitors ask them whether socialism can work, it strikes them as incongruous.

A question arises here which has been the subject of considerable discussion and controversy: what is the status of the concept of value in a socialist economy? In principle, it can easily be seen from the foregoing discussion that the concept of value must continue to play an important role, inasmuch as the respective prices of commodities will, on the average, be determined by the amount of socially necessary labor time used to produce them. Moreover, under socialism, workers are paid in accordance with the quantity and quality of their work, that is, in accordance with the amount of value produced. However, it is clear that a certain portion of this value must be set aside for social services, such as health, education, security, and the like, as well as for expansion, replacements, repairs, and similar necessities.

Thus, according to the Marxian position, the difference between capitalism and socialism does not consist in the presence of the value principle in the former, and its absence in the latter. It consists rather in the fact that under capitalism a certain portion of the surplus product is privately appropriated as private profit, whereas under socialism there is no such drain; the whole "surplus" is socially allocated. It is, of course, not only capitalist "exploitation" that is objected to, but the concomitant phenomena of mass involuntary unemployment and large scale economic insecurity. It is felt that these are connected with

private profit, since the private capitalist can use his profits to purchase the forces of production, and thus gear output and employment to his needs as a private capitalist.

An event which precipitated considerable discussion in our press was the appearance of an article in the influential Soviet journal, *Pod Znamenem Marxizma* entitled, "Some Problems of the Teaching of Political Economy" in the July-August issue of 1943. This article criticised certain methods of teaching and textbook materials used in Soviet institutions for the field of political economy. One of the areas criticised was the handling of value problems. Thus the article stated:

"In particular there took root in our teaching practice and textbook literature the false idea that in socialist economics there is no place for *the law of value*. This idea is in plain contradiction to numerous statements in the classics of Marxism, and to the whole experience of socialist construction." [1]

Some commentators expressed the opinion (apparently before the full text of the article was available to them) that the Soviet Union was abandoning the value principles of Marxian socialism, and was moving in the direction of capitalism. However, it is clear upon examination that the criticism is not of principles, but of teaching methods and textbook materials, and that the very criticism is that these methods and materials had departed from the principles of Marx.

CLASSES IN THE SOVIET UNION

The fact that we have spoken so far of two classes does not mean that there are only two. Common relationship to the means of production in terms of ownership, control and use is certainly a concept that does not limit application to dichotomous division. Marx often speaks of three, four and five classes.

[1] *Political Economy in the Soviet Union*, p. 31. International, New York. This pamphlet makes available in English the full text of the article.

He also speaks of sub-classes within a class.[1] Such matters can only be decided in terms of the concrete materials under investigation.

At the present time in the Soviet Union, for example, the chief classes are the working class, the term usually applied to the former proletariat, and the peasantry. While both these groups are referred to as "toilers" (*trudiashchiesia*), there is still a certain amount of difference in their relationship to the means of production. The Soviet Constitution points out that "Socialist property in the U.S.S.R. exists either in the form of state property (the possession of the whole people), or in the form of cooperative and collective-farm property (property of a collective farm or property of a cooperative association)." (Article 5.) The great bulk of non-agricultural enterprises is owned by the whole people as state property. At the same time, there exists, in significant measure, another form of ownership of certain forces of production, which, while not private, may nevertheless be distinguished from state ownership. As Article 7 puts it, "Public enterprises in collective farms and cooperative organizations, with their livestock and implements, the products of the collective farms and cooperative organizations, as well as their common buildings, constitute the common, socialist property of the collective farms and cooperative organizations." In other words, while this is a socialist form of ownership of the forces of production (also of the products), the unit of ownership is not the state as a whole, but the group of peasants (farmers) making up the collective farm or of other toilers forming a cooperative organization. The fact that each group works on forces of production socially owned precludes anything that could properly be called class antagonism, but at the same time

[1] In *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution* no fewer than six groupings to which the term class is applied are distinguished: feudal nobility, wealthy bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, small farmers, proletariat, agricultural laborers. The small farmer class is subdivided into two further classes: peasant freeholders and feudal tenants.

the fact that there is a distinction in the type of ownership marks a certain measure of class differentiation. It may be well to note in passing that the land, even in the case of collective farms, is not owned by these farms, but is "state property owned by the whole people" (Article 6), and is secured to the collective farms "for their use free of charge and for an unlimited time, that is, in perpetuity." (Article 8.)

Each collective farm is thus organized as a socialist unit in which the means of production are pooled, and is administered by a board elected by the members. The products are sold (chiefly to the state and large organizations) and there is a division of the collective income among the members in accordance with the work they have performed. It is most significant to note that the "members" comprise all the farm workers. The collective farm, while it may expand its membership, is prevented by law from simply hiring others to work on means of production which it owns. Such a practice would represent the individualistic wage system of employment and profit-making through exploitation. Class antagonism could be looked for as the natural result of such a situation, for one group would then own the means of production while the other worked on them.

Thus in the Soviet Union today "class antagonisms," as that phrase has been used in Marxian literature, are practically eradicated. There is, in effect, a classless society. In view of the considerations presented in our discusion so far, the reader will appreciate how wide of the mark is the impression that "classes" are being developed in the Soviet Union because of the fact that some people receive much higher wages than others, and that many accumulate considerable monetary savings. It is not the accumulation of money as such that makes a capitalist, nor different levels of income that form classes. It is wholly a matter of relationship to the forces of production. If one can use his accumulated money to buy the forces of production and hire others to work upon them, realizing a profit, then he can be-

come a capitalist. (It should be noted, in passing, that this was always possible under the nazi and fascist regimes.) But the Soviet citizen cannot use his money in this way. He can use it to buy consumption goods, but not the forces of production. There are different levels of income, in accordance with the quantity and quality of the work performed; there are also different levels of culture, tastes and interests. Such phenomena are, of course, a very different thing from classes as that term is defined in Marxian thought.

Class differences historically have usually involved a conflict of economic interests through which the differences become antagonisms. For instance, under capitalism it is in the interest of employers who are in business for profit to pay lower wages if thereby they can make more profit. Contrariwise, it is in the interest of employees to obtain higher wages than they are receiving. Such a diversity of interests creates the bargaining situation so characteristic of the economic structure of capitalism. Unions spring up, and, on the other hand, associations of employers. The bargaining processes are sometimes peaceful, sometimes violent, bloody and incredibly bitter, in spite of the fact that each side, generally speaking, may have the best of intentions.

THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN CULTURAL FIELDS

There is no need to dwell at length upon the existence of conflicts and, unfortunately, antagonisms among groups and individuals having different economic interests, or, in other words, upon the existence of class struggles on the economic level itself. Where clarification is especially needed is in regard to the significance of the further levels of conflict and action that follow from the class situation. First of all, it is held that, just as class membership does not depend on the awareness of the individual, so class loyalty does not automatically result

from awareness of membership. Certain individuals may be well aware of the fact that they belong economically to a certain class, yet may deliberately "desert" it and identify their fortunes with another class. Indeed, they may in certain cases battle in the interests of some class not their own far more forcefully and valiantly than the majority of its actual members. Friedrich Engels was a manufacturer, to mention only one case. Such cases, however, are not the rule. Again, individuals may scrupulously endeavor to avoid "struggles" of any kind beyond the level of economic conflicts as such. While their chances of success would appear to be very slim, they may well be sincerely unconscious of any extension of the struggle.

Whatever the subjective psychological attitude may be, it would be strange, as an objective social fact, if issues of such magnitude and importance, generated at the economic base of society, did not find some kind of outgrowth and expression at the upper levels, in what is known as the social superstructure. Where else can they find an outlet? Things of that kind do not evaporate. Most of most everyone's life is devoted to what the wonderfully expressive phrase calls "making a living." Where is the art, the morality, the religion, the politics, the laws, the philosophy, the science, asks the historical materialist, which could ever leave that out? Would any want to? To deal with human life is to deal with making a living. Pervasive and indispensable, this human process lavishes materials on all the arts and showers all the sciences with problems. The class struggles generated on the economic level are continued and reflected on the various levels of the social superstructure largely because man cannot help it and probably would not want to even if he could: they are too important and too interesting. Their interest and importance are derived not only from the fact that these struggles are economic, but precisely from the fact that they come to involve so much more than the economic—like the

flower that grows beautiful out of the common soil, to which it drops its seed again. It is not that man is always engaged in economic activity, but that practically all of his activity has economic significance, in root and consequence.

The individual artist, scientist, politician or philosopher may not be conscious of the economic roots and pre-conditions of his activity, but clearly, they are there. His work has economic consequences whether he wants it so or not, just as inescapably as his physical mass has gravitational consequences in the system of the universe. Because his work has economic consequences, he plays a part in class struggles. People are not, through some exceptional activity, drawn into these struggles. They are already in them, willy nilly, from the cradle to the grave. They have sides, whether they take them or not. However, they are usually quite willing to take sides and play a part. They usually develop strong convictions on economic issues, whether they regard them as economic or not. For example, it is the usual thing for artists, philosophers, politicians, scientists and the like to take sides in the struggle of justice against injustice, truth against error, right against wrong. Indeed, it might be said to be their duty to do so, not only in the abstract, of course, but in the concrete. Now in the concrete these things (justice, injustice, right, wrong) are the very warp and woof of class struggles; no one could deal seriously with these issues, and avoid the realm of economic problems.

In terms of power, there is obviously nothing more strategic than control of the forces of production. The reason has already been remarked upon: control of the forces of production is control of the means of life. No one and no institution can, in the long run, stand out against any class that exercises this control. Hence it follows that every social institution which exists must come to terms with such a class. Sometimes silence is sufficient, but in a competitive world this is not frequently the case.

More often, active support is necessary. "Who pays the piper calls the tune." The various parts of the social superstructure come to have a well defined sense of the limits of their possible activity in respect to the struggles of the class in power. How could it be otherwise? They are, broadly speaking, supported by that class. Its fortune is their fortune, its destiny is theirs. It is their constant benefactor; as it prospers, they can be sure that they will prosper. In time it comes to seem that the very existence of art, philosophy, education, science, is inextricably bound up with the particular economic structure and the particular form of control embodied in the existing ruling class.

As a given phase of social development reaches the point of maturity, almost the whole weight and influence of the cultural superstructure is exerted on the side of the class which controls the forces of production. Under these circumstances it might well seem as if it would never be possible to dislodge this class and that society might therefore remain forever at one stage. The reason why this does not happen we shall discuss in a moment. It should be emphasized for the present that the social superstructure is not directly engaged in producing the means of its own livelihood. It is a sort of social luxury, although one of those luxuries that come to be more necessary than necessities. However, the fact remains that, in terms of the production of economic necessities, it does not support itself. It must be supported by others, and can usually be supported only by the ruling class. Thus that situation comes about in which it is indebted to the ruling class, and, not only in order to discharge its debt, but also (as it puts it to itself—and quite accurately, under the circumstances) in order to do "its own good work" it must not challenge the ruling class. The condition of its own existence, in a sense, is that it come to favorable terms with the pre-conditions of existence of the class controlling the forces of production.

HOW SOCIETY PROGRESSES

Our discussion a while ago called up the question how, in the face of the inevitable control of the social superstructure by those who control its economic base, it ever becomes possible to dislodge a certain ruling class, how progress from one type of economic structure to another has ever taken place. Historical materialists take the position that the dynamic involved is supplied by the class struggle. The progressive improvement of any system of technics inevitably reaches a point where its further advance, or, in other words, the most efficient utilization of the possibilities it now presents, is obstructed and impeded by the prevailing system of economic relationships. It is in precisely these relationships, protected by law, that the interests of the ruling class are embodied and expressed. The improvements in technics which represent the progress in question are for a time confined to the established channels of the economic structure. That is to say, up to a certain point the existing type of class structure, the prevailing system of economic relationships can absorb and utilize the newly developed forces of production without itself having to undergo any fundamental modification. Sooner or later, however, the changes and improvements reach a point where they cannot be properly utilized or further developed unless the prevailing system of economic relationships suffers radical change. When a sufficiently powerful group of people apprehend that their life chances are bound up with these issues, a heroic contest ensues. Inasmuch as the established ruling class has entrenched itself, not only on the economic level, but, as we have seen, on every level of the superstructure as well, the contest must be fought in all realms —philosophic, political, artistic, ethical, religious, and so on.

In this contest, ideas are recognized as playing a very important part. It would be a mistake to think that this whole thesis gives intellectual activity no vital role in the onward

movement of history, or asserts that causal relations as between the economic base and the social superstructure are only a one-way process. Commenting on the positive role of intellectual activity in social progress, Stalin writes:

"New social ideas and theories arise only after the development of the material life of society has set new tasks before society. But once they have arisen they become a most potent force which facilitates the carrying out of the new tasks set by the development of the material life of society, a force which facilitates the progress of society. It is precisely here that the tremendous organizing, mobilizing and transforming value of new ideas, new theories, new political views and new political institutions manifests itself." [1]

To challenge a ruling class is obviously no small matter. For one thing, it usually involves challenging its very legality, which means to challenge the legality of the existing legal system. This would be an incomprehensible paradox were it not for the possibility of revolution, which will be the natural outcome if the one party is unwilling to give up its power and the other its claims. When such a revolution is successful, history has turned a corner and moved onto a broader highway. Productive potentialities are more abundantly utilized; the conditions of life of large numbers are markedly improved. New economic and political relationships are legalized; new philosophic and scientific perspectives are opened up; new moral and esthetic evaluations are worked out.

This sort of thing has happened not a few times in human history so far, as we may witness in such decisive and epoch making transitions as those from primitive communal to ancient slave economy, from the slave economy of the ancient world to the feudalism of the Middle Ages, from the feudal system to modern capitalism, and from capitalism to socialism.

[1] *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, pp. 22, 23. International, New York, 1940.

In each case a system of economic production had become outmoded. That is to say, new possibilities and conditions had emerged which could not be handled in terms of the old economic relationships. The simple communal organization of primitive society broke down under the demands created by the development of division of labor, barter and trade. Private appropriation and accumulation of the forces of production, including human labor power in the form of slaves, became profitable for the first time. This case is of exceptional historical interest because, *for the first time* well defined groups having conflicting relations to the forces of production sprang up. In others words, classes and class antagonisms arose. In order to deal with the problems generated by these antagonisms, the system of civil force, involving jails, armed police, prisons, and the like, theretofore unknown, came about: the state was born. The two dominant and antagonistic classes were, of course, slave owners and slaves. A new system of culture came into existence, and, indeed, flowered out with unforgettable resplendency, especially in Greece. It is easy to see how, in this social and cultural system, the relation of master and slave set the pattern, not only of economic production, but of moral and political valuation. Human slavery had to be justified as natural, rational and moral, or divinely sanctioned, unless the whole system were to be regarded as resting upon an illegitimate foundation. Hence, some of the most brilliant minds, such as Plato and Aristotle, worked out, in their brilliant way, an elaborate justification of it. However, conditions and problems changed. as they always do, and an economic system to meet them was evolved which came to be known as feudalism. The nature of this evolution (which was not without its revolutionary side) may be defined by saying that the slave owner was transformed into an hereditary feudal lord, and the slave into a serf. Once again the concrete character of relationship to the forces of production was radically altered. The rights, duties and privi-

leges of the feudal lord were different from those of the ancient slave owner, as those of the serf were different from the slave's. Once again a different system of legality and culture in general was worked out.

The medieval synthesis broke up when the type of productive technics, and the feudal relations accompanying them, exemplified in the manorial system, showed themselves incapable of meeting the needs, demands and opportunities brought forward by inventions and discoveries, by the opening up of new trade routes and a whole new world of economic possibilities. What was needed for this purpose was not a predominantly rural, agricultural economy centered in vast landed estates which were held in a feudal tenure that obstructed the free utilization of natural resources, and which were based on the labor of an immobilized class of hereditary serfs literally bound to the land by law. What was needed was a manufacturing, trading, shipping economy, an economy wherein the forces of production, including labor power, could be easily acquired on the open market. In short, the character of the basic relationship to the means of production had to be changed once more. The former ruling class of feudal landed aristocrats gave way (not without a titanic struggle, as we might expect) to the urban, burgher, (bourgeois) capitalist class. The serf, in turn, was transformed into a free, mobile wage worker.

It is historically clear that changes of this character could not be brought about without a radical reconstruction of the entire system of social life. For instance, the feudal political system of divine right monarchy could not be left standing, because the whole legal structure of this system expressed and protected the feudal economic relationships. By the same token, to strike a blow at the existing state was to strike a blow at the existing church. One could not separate them because they did not separate themselves: the church certified and sanctified the divine right of the king. In other words, the economic class

struggle inevitably becomes a general political and cultural struggle. While it was historically a great step forward to transform the feudal lord into a capitalist and his serf into a wage laborer, it is also historically accurate to say that certain problems were thereby generated which, as time went on, became more and more acute. For example, the serfs, in the nature of the case, could not experience mass unemployment. This was something reserved for "free" workers, just as periodic depressions of increasing magnitude and severity were phenomena reserved for a "free" economy. Free to suffer in a sense that the serfs could not, the proletarian class was also free to solve its problems in a way that was not possible for the serfs. In our own day we have witnessed a transition, in Russia, to a type of economy wherein the relationship of classes to the forces of production yet again has undergone decisive alteration. A new working class has become a new ruling class, and, as we might have expected, we may observe a new cultural system in process of development.

It need hardly be pointed out that it has not been our purpose, in this very brief discussion, to give an adequate historical account of the main stages in the evolution of human society. Our only purpose has been to indicate the significant, although not exclusive, role played by economic classes. In other words, the viewpoint under discussion emphasizes the fact that these decisive social transformations necessitated and involved fundamental changes of the economic system which in turn necessitated and involved fundamental changes of the general cultural system and that these changes were brought about as the result of struggles—physical and non-physical—on every level.

A class becomes the spokesman and champion of a type of economic production, not out of romantic interest (although plenty of such interest develops in the course of the ensuing conflicts), but because its own possibilities of life and growth in every sense, become identified with that type of production.

The very advance of technology may cast up a group of people with an unsatisfactory relationship to the forces of production. It is not always a case of those who have some wanting more, of course. It may just as well be a case of those getting less and less, those being reduced, as it were, to nothing, wanting something. Under these circumstances a revolution may take place because the situation that has arisen from the movement of the productive technics cannot be remedied in terms of the existing system of economic relationships. It would, of course, be very much better if society, in making its necessary and decisive transitions, peacefully altered the economic structure, thus alleviating the sufferings of mankind without resorting to revolution. But this happy issue evidently cannot be expected as a matter of course, although the possibility always exists. It would amount to something like a peaceful abdication on the part of a ruling class. To the class in question, and its supporters, this extreme measure hardly ever appears to be called for; to them it seems almost like a request to commit suicide.

What we have been examining, can be termed a basic sociological hypothesis, which tries to account for the way human history has moved. It is primarily a question of what the facts have been, not of what the historical materialist would have liked them to be. This point might seem obvious, were it not for the fact that it is so usual for critics of this theory to suggest a certain disdain for it on the ground that its authors show a disproportionate attachment to economic things, as if the historical materialists were expressing ethical evalutions rather than social causes. Logically, such a critic is in the same position as one who would criticize the germ theory of disease on the ground that its authors showed an undue attachment to germs.

THE MORALITY OF REVOLUTION

A point at which the moral issue enters legitimately is in relation to the question of revolution. The historical materialist

believes that the people possess the right of revolution under certain circumstances: when the revolution expresses the will of the majority and when the existing regime is not willing to grant what the people need and desire. Marxists, beginning with Marx, have shown themselves very emphatic in their rejection of the idea of indiscriminate revolution, of rebellion on principle, so to speak. Marx in his day was careful to contrast his point of view with that of "putschists" who were constantly thinking of insurrection. As we have seen, the theory of historical materialism holds that the only significant revolution, and the only type that stands any chance of success is one which, necessitated by a breakdown of the economic system, is capable of effecting the transition needed and desired by the majority. It is undoubtedly these considerations which Stalin has had in mind in insisting, on so many occasions, that it is impossible to "export revolutions." [1]

Historical materialists do not, of course, have any monopoly on a belief in the right of revolution. This belief long antedates Marxism and has been the common heritage of all democratic political philosophy since the breakdown of the idea of divine right. It was only in terms of the exercise of the right of revolution that the bourgeoisie was able to establish itself and to replace feudalism with capitalism. People who are overmastered by a fear of revolution or who deny its legitimacy in principle, or who take the position that no future revolution can ever be justified, are in disagreement, not only with historical materialism in particular, but with the whole democratic tradition in general. Moreover, the evidence clearly shows that historical materialism is rather distinguished by the number of restrictions which it places on the exercise of this right than by any constant desire to bring it into play. For example, while there would be an essential agreement with a thinker like Thomas Jefferson on the existence of the right of revolution, it would be impossible

[1] *Cf.* "Stalin—Howard Interview," March 1, 1936. International, New York.

to find, in Marxist literature, anything so "extreme" as what Jefferson says in regard to its periodic exercise. Evidently referring to the insurrection known as "Shay's rebellion" he wrote: "God forbid that we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion." [2] In expressing this judgment he even takes into consideration the fact that people are sometimes misinformed, and prone to act in the light of their misinformation, for he immediately goes on to say: "The people cannot be all, and always, well informed. The part which is wrong will be discontented, in proportion to the importance of the facts they misconceive. If they remain quiet under such misconceptions it is a lethargy, the forerunner of death to the public liberty. . . . And what country can preserve its liberties, if its rulers are not warned from time to time, that this people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms. The remedy is to set them right as to facts, pardon and pacify them. What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure." [3]

In discussing the French Revolution, Jefferson takes up another point that is frequently raised against the idea of revolution in general, namely, that innocent people lose their lives along with the guilty. "In the struggle which was necessary" he writes, "many guilty persons fell without the forms of trial, and with them, some innocent. These I deplore as much as anybody, and shall deplore some of them to the day of my death. But I deplore them as I should have done had they fallen in battle. It was necessary to use the arm of the people, a machine not quite so blind as balls and bombs, but blind to a certain degree. A few of their cordial friends met at their hands the fate of enemies. But time and truth will rescue and embalm their memories, while their posterity will be enjoying that very

[2] Letter to William Smith, 1787.
[3] *Ibid.*

liberty for which they would never have hesitated to offer up their lives. The liberty of the whole earth was depending on the issue of the contest, and was ever such a prize won with so little innocent blood?" [4]

Here the Soviet attitude would be in complete agreement with Jefferson's. History sometimes poses the problem in such a way that the choice is not between following a policy that can avoid misery, bloodshed and violence, or one that cannot. In some cases, these things cannot be avoided no matter what policy is followed, especially the policy of doing nothing. People then seek to avoid the greater evil in the only way they can. Jefferson argued that the choice in 1789 was not between bloodshed or no bloodshed, but between the indefinitely protracted, large scale bloodshed involved in the continuance of the old regime. and the limited bloodshed of a revolution which would make it possible to set up a new system. The Russian revolutionist saw the same choice in respect to the Tsarist regime. In each case, the regime in question gave the people no other choice.

SUMMARY

Recalling the questions, with which we began, we may summarize some of the chief points of our discussion. To what basic factors can we trace the origin, development and decline of societies, cultures, nations? What fundamental relationships are found among the institutions making up any society? Historical materialism holds that in any society and in the evolution of any society, the forces of production must be reckoned with as basic. Necessarily responsive to these and limited by their conditions is the system of economic relationships in which men and groups stand to one another in the process of utilizing the forces of production and consuming the goods produced. It is recognized that it is always a very difficult thing to make basic

[4] Letter to Short, 1793.

changes in the relations of production, because these relations represent the vested interest of the most powerful class in society, the source of whose power is precisely the control which that system of relationships gives them over the forces of production. This system takes hold in the first place because no more advantageous way of working the productive forces can be put in operation. So long as the basic character of the forces remains stable, such modifications and refinements as take place in the economic structure will continue to be determined mainly by the technical base in the sense of realizing further potentialities of the original situation under the guidance of the class in the position of control. Of course, the group, the particular people in control, may be changed many times over in terms of combinations and manipulations within the same economic structure. What is here in question, however, is something quite different: a change, not of persons, but of the class as such which exercises control. That sort of change can only take place in response to a basic change in the technics of production, in response to new problems, needs, demands and possibilities. It takes place, when it does, because this dual set of circumstances presents itself: life under the prevailing system becomes less and less tolerable for more and more people, while at the same time it becomes clearer and clearer that the situation can not only be remedied, but improved (in terms of greater efficiency, and higher productivity), by revamping the economic structure.

Thus the indispensable ally in any successful revolution is the forces of production. Conversely, when this ally is ready, the revolution, with all its consequences, sooner or later takes place. These two, the productive forces and the economic structure, taken together, form what has been referred to as the economic base of society. Upon this base rises a superstructure of arts, sciences, laws, government, morality, philosophy, education, religion and other such cultural phenomena. This social superstructure is in the first place concerned, in very large part,

with the phenomena and problems thrown up by the economic base. Moreover, it finds that the very possibility of its own cherished existence depends upon the maintenance of good relations with the economic base. In the first place, it is supported by this base, and in the second, its activity influences the base by way of sanctioning, justifying, opposing, doubting, questioning, obstructing, aiding—in short, by saying, yea, nay, or remaining silent. Whatever is done has consequences, which in the main, are quite evident to the base, which is, of course, concerned to strengthen itself. Hence the superstructure grows and develops in a certain relationship to the base—a relationship in which it is at once higher than and subordinate to the base: higher in the realm of values, subordinate in the realm of physical causes.

It must not be thought, however, that the superstructure cannot cause changes in the economic base. We have, in fact, just pointed out that one of its chief characteristics is just the fact that it can and does cause such changes. Just as the historical materialist finds in the relations between the economic structure and the forces of production, so he finds in the relations between social superstructure and the economic base taken as a whole, that the causal process is not one way but two way. However, here again, while he recognizes that the influencing is both ways, he points out that the economic base is the more powerful.

Thus the origin, development and decline of societies, cultures, nations, is a drama played out by people, rulers, parties, armies, arts and sciences acting mainly in relation to the changing and controlling of the forces of production. Barring supernatural or mystical hypotheses about human destiny, it should certainly not seem strange that the chief locus of man's social activity should be those things which society cannot do without. There are levels of indispensability. First come the things that we cannot do without, then the things that are indispensable to those things.

ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN HISTORY

It should be clear that there is involved here no denial of the role of the individual in history. This theme is, in fact, a favorite one with Soviet writers, the unanimous tenor of whose thought is that any such denial is foreign to their philosophy. Individual differences, idiosyncrasies, quirks of temperament, accidents of training—all such things can become very important at one or another stage or crisis in human history. But, in regard to them, it is, of course, necessary to inquire whence and whither. In large part such things themselves come from social conditioning, and, in any case, their exercise and operation must take place strictly in relation to a situation and context of circumstances given by the movement of underlying factors. Individual peculiarities and social accidents may somewhat hasten or delay, but they cannot prevent or create this movement. Dialectical materialists hold that accidents are real, although not uncaused. An accident is something which confronts a causally connected series of phenomena, but which, in its origin, had nothing to do with this series. For example, relative to the general development of a war, it is an accident that a certain officer's wife is a gossip, although, of course, there are causes for such a trait of character, and it might indeed become important in the war situation.

IN WHAT DIRECTION IS HISTORY MOVING?

Another question which we noted at the beginning concerned the "direction" of human history. In other words, is it possible to discern any general stage or state of affairs towards which human history is moving? The historical materialist feels that it is, if this question is not interpreted in mystical or supernatural terms, but is approached strictly in terms of an objective analysis of the forces that have been operating in the past

and that may be observed in the present. His thesis in this regard revolves principally around the transition from capitalism to socialism. We have already indicated some of the historical factors involved in this transition. In terms of the methodology which we have been examining, we find it natural that Soviet philosophers should approach the problem through such questions as the following: What is the character of the productive forces, under capitalism? What types of class and class struggles do we find on the scene? What direction have these struggles so far taken? What is the evidently probable outcome?

As we have seen, one of the most interesting traits of the capitalist system as it emerges from feudalism is the way it perseveringly places upon the free and open market, accessible to immediate sale and purchase, practically all the means of production. Difficult as it was to slough off the thousand and one feudal restrictions—the maze of rights, duties, obligations and privileges in respect to natural resources, land, forms of work and means of production generally, hazardous as it was to challenge the church and all its traditions sanctifying these feudal usages and multiplying them in its own right, this was precisely what had to be done in order for the capitalist system to live, in order for it to become "capitalism." It was nothing less than a life and death struggle (which, in the nature of the case, had to be fought out on every level) against the feudal system in order to approach as nearly as possible to the condition of placing everything necessary to production at the beck and call of money.

Now one of the principal factors in production is, of course, labor power, as embodied in the working man himself, in whose case, no less than in that of the land or of any other productive factor, capitalism had to make a fluid, easily manipulated stream out of the rigid, crystallized hierarchy of feudalism. The necessary condition, so far as labor was concerned, was brought about, roughly speaking, by changing serfs into wage laborers.

As we noted, this process not only "freed" the serfs from their binding system of duties and obligations, it also freed the lords from their obligations towards the serfs. This lower class, which had hitherto depended on a lord, was now to depend upon a job. But the very freedom of movement which the emerging capitalists needed and were obtaining became a source of hazard to the emerging wage laborers; it had the effect of robbing them of security. What the capitalists needed for their operations was precisely a "labor market," that is, supplies of labor, ready to be purchased—fearful condition—*when needed*. While waiting, they were, of course unemployed, and it was not clear just how they were to gain their support. Marx used a very expressive phrase to denote this momentous phenomenon—the "industrial reserve army."

What makes the situation so serious, and, in the view of the historical materialist, presages the final outcome, is the fact that improvements in the technics of production serve to increase the ranks of this unfortunate reserve army. There is a constant drive, in itself quite laudable, and, in any case, profitable to employers, to make machinery supplant men, so that, where a hundred men were needed before, only seventy-five are now needed, then sixty, and so on. An ameliorating factor, on which hopeful emphasis has frequently been laid, is the possible re-employment of those supplanted by the new machines on the making and servicing of these machines themselves. While this result is, to a certain extent, brought about, it is held that the number thus reemployed is not large enough to make any appreciable approach to an adjustment of the situation. It is natural that this should be so, since the real problem set by technology is to accomplish a given result in toto by the use of less man power. There would probably be considered to be very little "improvement" resulting from any machine which required for its own manufacture and maintenance an addition to one payroll of exactly the number of men it displaced from another.

Where, it is asked, would the "savings" in such machines lie, since the cost of them would have to include the wages of the very number of workers they displaced.

What would help a good deal to alleviate such a situation is a constantly expanding market, which would draw into service the heavy accretions to the industrial reserve army. But there has not been, under capitalism, a market of uninterrupted expansion. Instead, there has been the well known and important phenomenon of the "business cycle," involving recurrent patterns of over-production, depression, unemployment, recovery, overproduction, depression and so on. The historical materialist points out that as such crises become more severe, as markets become crowded, as technical improvements make possible the displacement of more and more workers, life becomes more and more difficult for masses of the working class. Larger and larger numbers of them become involuntarily attached to the "reserve" during periods of depression.

CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM

Almost from the birth of the capitalist system it has been pointed out by socialists that one remedy for this grievous situation might be found in certain alterations of the economic structure. These alterations would be such that the ownership, management and control of the tools of production and the labor of workers upon them would not proceed upon a private, competitive, individualistic and unplanned basis, but upon a socialized and planned basis. It was clear from the start that society could really use all that workers—including the whole "industrial reserve army" could produce—or that if ever there was a real surplus, the working day could be shortened and income maintained. Now if society is in a position to use all that its individual members are capable of producing in a standard working day, how is such a thing as involuntary un-

employment possible? The reason given is that under capitalism, production is necessarily geared to a competitive, profit based market. Men are hired to work upon the means of production only in case some entrepreneur with capital can make a profit by selling the commodities so produced. But why can he not always sell them if society can really use all that is produced? Because there comes a time when people who need these commodities have not the "purchasing power" to buy them. How does it happen that they have not the purchasing power? Because there has been a crisis and they have been discharged from their jobs. Why was there a crisis? Because the market was over-produced, prices tumbled and orders fell off. Why was the market over-produced? Because producers, under the necessity of competing with one another, and keeping their productive plans a secret from one another, and for various other reasons, put out more than the purchasing power of the market could at the time absorb. Faced by this situation, and compelled to act in the light of effect on profits, each producer is moved to dispose quickly of what later may become a source of greater loss. If people could only find work, and thus "purchasing power," they would gladly buy these commodities. But they cannot find an opportunity to work at producing these commodities because the commodities are already too cheap; they cannot acquire the commodities because the commodities are too plentiful.

This ironical impasse becames more tragic at each repetition. Fourier clearly perceived it a hundred years ago and vividly dubbed it the *crise pléthorique*. Even then many a "utopian" socialist maintained that it could be prevented if the function of production were released from its dependence upon the competitive market based on private profit, and if, consequently, the employment of workers no longer depended upon its being a source of profit to some individual competing with other individuals. In other words, it would do much good if

the means of production were collectively owned and managed, so that production could be planned in view of needs rather than as instrumental to profits and people could be "employed" without any involuntary interruption. It became clearer and clearer also that such reconstruction of economic relationships would serve to release the full potentialities of industrial technics, so that each successive improvement, however drastic in replacing machinery with men, could never throw people out of work but would, on the contrary, lower their hours of labor, increase their incomes, or both.

Was it Fourier, or some one else with the best intentions in the world who, confident that an appeal to the moral sense of man could not possibly fail in so clear a case, publicly invited the people of France to pool their resources to usher in the era of collectivism, and hired a hall in Paris in which the shower of capital he anticipated could be deposited in accordance with notices he caused to appear in the newspapers? We smile at such things and it is this smile which shows, better than a hundred pages of elaborate discourse, why these kindly, gentle, zealous schemes never succeeded.

Under the impact of these events, the working class organizes; it develops its spokesmen, its political parties. New markets decrease; technics improve; crises become more severe. Class struggles sharpen; a revolution which takes place in Russia succeeds, and a transition from capitalism to socialism takes on the dimensions of an historical fact.

SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM

It is important to observe that a distinction is drawn between socialism and communism. Socialism is sometimes called the first or lower phase of communism. Although, like Marx and Engels in their day, Soviet thinkers are more prone to deal with social problems of the present, and the basic laws of historical develop-

ment, than to speculate on the details of life in future epochs, there are certain broad features in the distinction between socialism and communism which are widely commented on in Soviet thought.

Economically, socialism, although it is characterized by collective ownership of the means of production, and the consequent abolition of classes, exploitation and involuntary unemployment, still has a wage and money economy. Thus, a basic principle of socialism is expressed in the slogan, "From each according to ability, to each according to work performed." That is, each individual receives a monetary reward in proportion to the quantity and quality of his work. The application of this principle is felt to be a significant advance over capitalism insofar as the phenomenon of the business cycle, with its large scale unemployment prevents masses of people from working in accordance with their abilities. Also, the system of private employment, insofar as it is based on making a profit from the labors of others, is considered to lead to an exploitation which results in workers not receiving the full measure of what they produce.

Communism, however, is expected to go farther than socialism. That is, it will be characterized by an economy which utilizes the fullest potential of productivity inherent in a system of technics improved and perfected far beyond what is now known. It is felt that the probable result will be an economy of such great abundance that it will become possible to apply the principle, "From each according to ability, to each according to need." [1] In other words, when the level of productive power is sufficiently high, it is expected that the resultant quantities of goods will be great enough for anyone to avail himself of anything he needs, anything he can properly use.

In its fullest development, this system pre-supposes a world wide organization of communist society in which the chief

[1] Marx: The Gotha Program.

causes of strife are eliminated through the collective ownership of productive resources. Hence, as we shall see in more detail later, the apparatus of state force is expected to "wither away." That is, the main causes of crime and war are held to be economic, so that when productive potentialities are fully utilized, and wants are fully satisfied, the need for using force to settle such disputes as may arise will gradually disappear. It is also presupposed that the immeasurably greater possibilities of educational development and health protection that would accompany such a system would result in emotional adjustment and the balanced growth of personality to a degree now unknown.

Another social objective that is frequently mentioned as something attainable under communism rather than socialism is the elimination of cultural lags, psychological antagonisms, and economic discrepancies between town and country. It is considered that the traditional cultural backwardness of the countryside (including "primitive" and "colonial" areas), its physical isolation, its remoteness from nerve centers of industrial productivity, and its consequent sense of alienation from the big cities, can only be overcome by the more advanced social planning and technical facilities of communism. A better interpenetration of industry and agriculture, a more balanced and richer availability of the values of nature and human culture will then become possible. In the same process, it is expected that the big city will cease to have the character of a monstrous metropolis in which masses live an overcrowded, unhealthy life divorced from contact with nature, while sated and irritated by too much contact with their fellows and with raw discordant mechanism.

Another broad objective, connected with the last, is the elimination of deficiencies and antagonisms in the relations between manual and mental labor. Here again it is felt that the unplanned and uncontrolled growth of production has resulted in a certain imbalance of physical and cultural factors. Large

numbers of "brain" workers suffer from lack of physical development, while masses of "manual" workers suffer in point of intellectual development. A more balanced pattern of life activity, and hence, a more versatile and richer personality are looked for as a result of the increased possibilities of communist planning.

It is important to mark the significant developments that have taken place in Marxian thought regarding the possibility of attaining the objectives of socialism and communism. Marx and Engels in their day took the position that the victory of a socialist revolution was hardly possible except as a more or less world wide phenomenon, as a simultaneous, cooperative effort in a group of leading countries.

Lenin, however, was impressed by what he termed the "law of uneven development of capitalism." That is, in the period of world imperialism the rivalries of contending powers, and the basic problems and difficulties of capitalism reach very different degrees of acuteness in different parts of the world. Hence, a revolution could be expected to burst forth in some "weak link" [1] of the imperialist chain while capitalism was still relatively strong in other parts of the world. Lenin therefore concluded that a socialist revolution could be victorious in a single country, and that it was possible to complete the construction of socialist society in that country. Thus in 1915 he wrote: "Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible, first in

[1] Reflecting Lenin's thesis, Stalin, in 1924, gave the following reason why the revolution took place first in Russia "In 1917, the chain of the imperialist world front turned out to be weaker in Russia than in the other countries. It was there that it was broken and afforded an outlet for the proletarian revolution. Why? Because in Russia . . a revolutionary proletariat . . . had such an important ally as the vast mass of the peasantry who were oppressed and exploited by the landlords, because the revolution there found itself opposed by tsarism, the hideous representative of imperialism, devoid of all moral authority and deservedly hated by the whole people The chain proved to be weakest in Russia, although that country was less developed in a capitalistic sense than, for example, France, Germany, England or America." *Leninism*, Vol. I, p. 33, 1934 ed.

a few or even in one single country taken separately." [2] In 1922 he made the statement that "N.E.P.[3] Russia will become socialist Russia." [4] Again, in May of 1923 he wrote in his pamphlet, *On Cooperation* that the Soviet Union contained "all that is necessary for the building of complete socialist society." [5]

Lenin's view was that Marx and Engels were correct in relation to the conditions of their day, but that the conditions had changed; the earlier thinkers had not experienced the full impact of world imperialism, and hence, their conclusions were not adequate to the later period.

It is significant to note that this question became one of the chief issues dividing the camp of Stalin from that of Leon Trotsky; indeed, it might be said that it became the turning point in the whole historical development of the Soviet Union. For it was necessary to decide whether to use the resources and man power of the country to try to build socialism (which would require peaceful and cooperative relations with the rest of the world), or to use the country's resources to foment and incite revolutions in other countries (a policy which would welcome wars and armed clashes). In the preface to his book, *The Year 1905*, written in 1922, Trotsky declared: "The contradictions in the situation of the workers' government in a backward country with an overwhelming peasant population can be solved only on an international scale, on the arena of a world proletarian revolution."

The role of the peasantry was central in the problem. Trotsky evidently had little confidence in Lenin's and Stalin's concept of a kind of alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry, an alliance in which the leading and guiding part would

[2] *Collected Works*, Vol. XVIII, p 272

[3] N E.P. signifies the New Economic Policy, that is, the policy, sponsored by Lenin, of allowing a certain amount of capitalist enterprise while the young Soviet regime was too weak to manage its economy on a wholly socialist basis.

[4] Quoted in Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. I, p. 232, 1934 ed. *Cf.* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVII, p. 366.

[5] *Ibid.*, quoted, p. 232. *Cf.* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVII, p. 392.

be taken by the proletariat. Where Lenin and Stalin were inclined to look upon the poorer and middle groups of the peasantry as potential allies in the building of socialism, Trotsky was prone to see in the peasantry in general a hostile force to be treated as an antagonist rather than as an ally. Thus in the passage from which we have just quoted he voices his expectation that "the proletariat will come into hostile collision not only with the bourgeois groupings which supported the proletariat during the first stages of the revolutionary struggle, but also with the broad masses of the peasants . . ." In this connection it is important to recall that Stalin's tactic in the struggle against the "kulaks," the well-to-do peasants who could not be expected to enter the collective farms, was to join the forces of the proletariat with the poor and middle peasants against the comparatively small group of richer peasants.

The momentous decision, taken in 1927–28, to embark on the first Five Year Plan, signified the victory of Lenin's and Stalin's policy over Trotsky's. It meant entering on a full scale attempt to build socialism in one country. The Plans (two and three-quarters were carried out by the time of the Nazi attack in 1941) succeeded beyond the expectations of the vast majority of critics. A great deal of what had been declared impossible was achieved, and it was considered that the construction of an operating socialist society was virtually completed before the outbreak of the war.

Although Lenin did not consider that Marx's earlier views on the possibility of socialism were applicable to his (Lenin's) day, he still agreed with Marx's thesis that communism, the higher stage, was possible only on a world wide basis. By 1938 Stalin had arrived at a modification of this view somewhat comparable to Lenin's earlier modification of Marx's view. He developed the thesis that the chief features of communism could be constructed in one country, the principal exception being the factor of stateless administration. That is, in his view, an econ-

omy of unrestricted abundance could be developed, and much could be done towards eradicating the lags and antagonisms between town and country, and between mental and manual labor, but the apparatus of state force, embodied in police, army and navy, would continue to be necessary until deep rooted economic conflicts had disappeared from the world as a whole.

It is of the utmost relevance, in considering, as we shall in detail, the nature and meaning of the dialectical method, to note that Lenin and Stalin took the view that, in abandoning earlier theses, they were not departing from, but were applying the Marxian dialectical method. They considered that they were following Marx and Engels in the conception that the essence and basis of that method lay in growth and development, and in the willingness to respond to changing conditions, rather than in clinging to theses, irrespective of the movement of history, as if they constituted an immutable dogma. The theses here in question are, of course, those concerned with means, methods and tactics, in their relation to social phenomena. The basic aims and objectives, the system of socio-ethical values, have not been modified.

The general theory of historical materialism gives the Soviet thinker a method and orientation in all fields included in the social superstructure: the social sciences, the arts, the history of philosophy, education, morals, politics and the like. Looked upon as validated in its general form by general evidence, the theory of historical materialism becomes, in any of these specific fields, a working hypothesis in the investigation of the concrete data of that area. It is by no means a substitute for empirical investigation, as we shall see.

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL LIFE: SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

LENIN ON DEMOCRACY

Although it may seem strange to readers of our popular press, Soviet thinkers from the earliest days of the Revolution have developed their political philosophy in terms of a certain concept of democracy. Lenin, for example, in *State and Revolution*, most of which was written just before the revolution of 1917, and which has become a classic source both in respect to theory and practice, constantly recurs to the theme of democracy. It is important to note, in order to understand the actual tenor of his thought, that some of his statements, if taken out of context, seem to imply a rejection of democracy. Thus at one point he writes:

"In the current arguments about the state, the mistake is constantly made about which Engels cautions here, and which we have indicated above, namely, it is constantly forgotten that the destruction of the state means also the destruction of democracy; that the withering away of the state means also the withering away of democracy." [1]

Lenin evidently felt that his words might be misunderstood, for he adds:

"At first sight such a statement seems exceedingly strange and incomprehensible; indeed, someone may even begin to fear

[1] *Collected Works*, Vol. XXI, Bk. II, p. 214. New York, International.

lest we be expecting the advent of such an order of society in which the principle of the subordination of the minority to the majority will not be respected,—for is not a democracy just the recognition of this principle?

"No, democracy is *not* identical with the subordination of the minority to the majority. Democracy is a *state* recognizing the subordination of the minority to the majority, i.e., an organization for the systematic use of *violence* by one class against the other, by one part of the population against another.

"We set ourselves the ultimate aim of destroying the state, i.e., every organized and systematic violence, every use of violence against man in general. We do not expect the advent of an order of society in which the principle of subordination of minority to majority will not be observed. But, striving for Socialism, we are convinced that it will develop into Communism, that side by side with this, there will vanish all need for force, for the *subjection* of one man to another, and of one part of the population to another, since people will *grow accustomed* to observing the elementary conditions of social existence *without force and without subjection.*

"In order to emphasize this element of habit, Engels speaks of a *new generation* 'reared under new and free social conditions' which 'will be able to throw on the scrap heap all this state rubbish'—every kind of state, including even the democratic-republican state." [2]

There are several points in this passage which raise important issues that we shall want to examine later on. At present we are concerned with the fact that when Lenin, following Engels' thought, speaks of democracy withering away, he has in mind the state structure of democracy, insofar as it relies on agencies of force, such as prisons, jails, police, and criminal courts, not the principle or spirit of democracy itself. This principle may permeate social life whether there is a state or not, and, under

[2] *Ibid.* Italics of original.

communism, will be expected to. Moreover, so long as a state is necessary, it must be a democratic state. Lenin speaks in this sense of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the state under socialism:

"But the dictatorship of the proletariat . . . cannot produce merely an expansion of democracy . . . which *for the first time* becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the rich folk." [3]

It should be emphasized that in Marxian usage, the term "dictatorship" signifies that state feature, just referred to, which represents an apparatus of force—army, police, jails, and the like. In other words, every state is considered a dictatorship insofar as it relies on such instrumentalities, the very use of which constitutes an admission that certain problems cannot be handled by peaceful persuasion, but require physical dictation sanctioned by law. The choice, therefore, is not between having a state that is a dictatorship and a state that is not. As Marxists use the term, the fundamental question to them is (so long as there is a state): in the interests of which class does the dictatorship function? As we saw in the preceding chapter, their thesis is that, in the nature of the case, the political forms of the social superstructure must be consonant with the productive necessities of the economic base. That is, the political and state system must give legal sanction and physical protection to the forms of property relations found at the base; otherwise, one or the other would lose hold. It is in this sense that they consider the ancient slave state a dictatorship of slave owners, the medieval state a dictatorship of the feudal nobles, and the modern state under capitalism a dictatorship of capitalists.

Thus it should be clear that the meaning of the phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" in Soviet usage is radically different from the meaning of the term "dictator" in the fascist or nazi usage, although many people apparently reason that be-

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 219. Italics of original.

cause the language is similar, the actual institutions must be similar. Nothing could be more dangerously superficial. The nazi-fascist dictator-principle (*fuhrer-prinzip*), means a justification of rule by a single individual on the basis of his superior will and strength. It is proudly and explicitly presented by the fascist ideologists as the direct antithesis of democracy, and is, of course, connected with concepts of an élite group and racial superiority, which are utterly foreign to Soviet philosophy. Hitler and Mussolini never regarded democratic countries as examples of the dictator-principle, nor would they seriously regard nazism or fascism as examples of democracy. They never tired of pointing out that democracy was what they were opposed to, that it was the basic mistake they intended to correct, that its principles were what they intended to abolish. Majority rule, for example, is looked upon as a violation of the natural order of things. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler wrote:

"The parliamentary principle of decision by majority, by denying the authority of the person and placing in its stead the number of the crowd in question, sins against the aristocratic basic idea of Nature. . . ." [4]

It is interesting to note that he had exactly the same objection to Marxism:

". . . . Marxism rejects the aristocratic principle in nature; instead of the eternal privilege of force and strength, it places the mass of numbers and its deadweight." [5]

Mussolini had the same basic outlook as Hitler. In his *Doctrine of Fascism*, in a note referring to the first world war, Mussolini wrote:

"The war was 'revolutionary' in the sense that—with streams of blood—it did away with the century of Democracy, the century of number, the century of majorities and of quantities."

[4] Reynal and Hitchcock, Vol. I, p. 103
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Undoubtedly, the existence of a one-party political system is the common ground between nazism and fascism on the one side, and the Soviet Union on the other which has given rise to most misapprehensions in this regard. But we should, of course, look beneath the surface if we wish to approach the matter seriously. We should examine not only the form but the content. We must examine the actual purposes, aims, and policies of the respective parties, just as we would have to do in the case of two armies. Is the mere fact that they are both armies sufficient to warrant the conclusion that they stand for the same thing? In terms of motivation, the Soviet one-party system was conceived of as the only effective instrumentality that could have been used under the actually existing conditions for the attainment of wider democratic objectives. These objectives were and are conceived of not only as political in the narrow sense, but as social in the broader sense. In spite of all such considerations, many people, even some of scholarly pretensions, apparently feel justified in drawing the conclusion that the Soviet Union could never be classed as a democracy because it calls itself a dictatorship of the proletariat, and that it therefore must be put in the same class as fascism or nazism. This kind of "reasoning" from terminology is in some ways worse than no reasoning at all. A person who had no opinion at all about Great Britain might well be less of a menace to fruitful international relations than one who had a strong belief that Britain should be treated as outside the class of democracies because it calls itself a monarchy.

It would be an equally unsound method to conclude that the Soviet Union should be counted as a democracy simply because it calls itself one. Its relationship to democracy can only be clarified by the detailed examination of principles and practices which we are here entering upon. The present point is that the very widespread tendency to assume that the use of a phrase like "dictatorship of the proletariat" can settle the

question represents a type of thinking that is clearly over-simplified.

WHEN IS A COUNTRY DEMOCRATIC?

"Proletarian" or "Soviet" or "socialist" democracy is claimed to be a higher stage, a fuller development of democracy than anything that has yet taken place in the western world. It is claimed to be of greater range or extent in the sense that it is applied to all phases of social life, the economic, the cultural, the domestic, and to the realm of racial and national problems as well as, in a certain sense, to political fields. Let us take up, in turn, these aspects of the Soviet concept of democracy, and examine the reasons advanced in support of its claim. In this connection it might be well to emphasize a certain caution which, when pointed out, is likely to recommend itself, but which, if not explicitly indicated, is likely to be forgotten. That is, that the question whether a certain country is a democracy or not cannot be adequately handled by examining political forms alone. If we are to be realistic we must recognize that the concept of democracy has a vital relation to all social institutions, not merely to politics, and that, in political matters, it cannot be decided on grounds of mere forms. In other words, democracy is not so much a *form* as a *principle* of government, and not only a principle of government, but a principle of social life. For example, few people hesitate to refer to Great Britain as a fellow democracy of the United States. Yet when we examine political forms we find very wide divergencies. Britain has an hereditary monarchy, which, in itself, we do not regard as a democratic institution. It also has an hereditary peerage, which we likewise would reject in terms of our democratic criteria. One of the two houses of legislature is the House of Lords, open only to those favored by the accident of aristocratic birth or by the special creation of an hereditary "title." If we call Great Britain a

democratic country, it is certainly not in virtue of such political or social forms, but rather because of the basic content, the actual operation of its principal institutions in terms of their effects and possibilities in relation to the whole people.

We see the same situation if we examine the concept of democracy in its historical context. We refer to Athenian democracy in spite of the fact that it included legalized slavery, as, indeed, our own democracy did up to the Civil War. Here again, we judge in the light of the whole social situation, its content and underlying movement, rather than by any one factor taken in isolation. Yet this tendency to isolate factors is exactly the procedure followed by some when they discuss the contemporary situation, in terms, for example, of the multi-party political system or of a certain religious system. Although we favor the multi-party political system, we have little reason for considering it an absolute and permanent pre-condition of democracy, any more than an elected President or non-hereditary houses of legislature could be considered as absolute conditions. Not only is it confined to one social institution, the political, but even there, we recognize, if we are candid, that it is, in itself, no automatic guarantee of genuine democracy. Likewise, we can hardly pitch upon any one religious system as the *sine qua non* of democracy. Periclean Athens did not possess Christianity; eighteenth century French democracy was built up by a school of thinkers predominantly and militantly atheistic, while contemporary Britain has an established state church, all which systems are markedly different from our own.

Democracy is eminently a matter of degree. It would be safe to say that no complete or perfect democracy has yet come to fruition in human history. Undoubtedly, some of its greatest triumphs are reserved for the future. We must bear in mind the historical truth that other nations have been able to make outstanding contributions to the theory and practice of democracy through institutions quite different from ours. In fact, historical

reflection will lead us to the conclusion that differing surrounding circumstances necessitate, different institutions, if democracy is to be attained at all. Above all, we must avoid the exceedingly childish but rather widespread notion that if we admit that some other country has attained any democratic objectives through institutions different from ours, we are thereby derogating from the greatness of our own country, or casting aspersions on the principles familiar to our democratic tradition.

DEMOCRACY AND ECONOMICS

With these considerations in view, let us examine the Soviet conception of democracy in its application to the several institutions of social life. Let us begin with the economic. What does economic democracy mean in the Soviet conception? In terms of rights, it means basically, that every adult willing and able to work has an inalienable right to continuous, socially useful employment at the level of his qualifications, freedom from exploitation (the appropriation as "private profit" by a "private owner" of part of the value he creates by his labor)[1] and participation in the planning and management of economic production and distribution.

In terms of objectives it means that economic institutions shall be deliberately arranged so that it will be possible for each individual to give to society according to his ability and receive, under socialism, according to work performed, and under communism, according to need. It means the abolition of all obstacles standing in the way of these objectives, such as class antagonisms, private ownership of the means of production, involuntary unemployment and other related phenomena.

The concrete significance of such rights and objectives can, of course, only be gauged by inquiring into their actual opera-

[1] See the preceding chapter for a detailed analysis of the concept of surplus value.

tion. To what extent have they been implemented? Momentous steps that are fairly well known have been taken in the direction of these ends in the U.S.S.R. In fact, it was the basic aim of the whole revolution to take the means of production out of private ownership and place them under collective ownership, which has been done. There is no involuntary unemployment in the U.S.S.R., and economic security, in the sense of opportunity for continuous employment at the level of qualifications, is guaranteed through planned production.

It is not only in the fact of ownership, however, but also in the participation in management in which democracy manifests itself in the economic sphere. While participation in management could hardly become very "democratic," realistically speaking, without the fact of democratic ownership, management is also an important problem. In this connection it is pertinent to recall a matter that was discussed briefly in the preceding chapter, namely, the organization of the collective farm. The "kolkhoz," [2] as it is usually called, is the standard pattern of agricultural enterprise in a country where around half the population is still in the farming group. Each collective farm, whether large or small, is in the first place composed of owner-worker-members. That is to say, with the exception of occasional specialists and the like, no collective farm can hire non-members to work for it. The Soviet collective farmer is thus never a wage laborer, a migratory "hand," or a seasonal superfluity, but is secure in his collective tenure of the land and has the status of a joint owner. While the government sets prices for the portion of the crop for which it contracts, the collective farm as a whole owns or leases its tools, implements and farm buildings, and is managed by a board elected by majority vote of the members.

[2] A word formed, in the Russian, by combining the first syllable of each of the two constituent words of which the term, collective farm (kollektivnoe khoziaistvo), is made up.

The participation of the industrial, professional, and, in general, non-agricultural worker in the management of the economic structure takes place in various ways, some of which are shared by the collective farmer. The economic structure of the country as a whole operates under a number of ministries, each with a head having something of the status of a cabinet official responsible to the Supreme Soviet, a body directly elected by the citizens. Every working institution, however large or small, has a place in the quinquennial and annual economic plans of the country. The total body of workers in any such institution constitute what is known as its collective, and the final plan represents the results of discussions, conferences and suggestions all along the line—from the small collective at one end, through intermediate planning agencies, to the central planning organs at the other end.

In still another fashion, the non-agricultural worker is brought into participation in economic management—through the trade unions. Practically all belong to these organizations, which elect their own officials and which have important responsibilities in any working enterprise.

Another factor, not much written about, but which is, nevertheless, very significant from the point of view of democratic participation in the economic structure, is the remarkable practice known as "criticism and self criticism." Every collective of every working institution meets periodically for this sort of criticism. In practice, this means that the whole conduct of the administration is thoroughly raked over by the assembled workers, who bring up questions, problems, complaints, suggestions and all manner of criticisms in regard to every phase of the work, working conditions and surrounding circumstances. Everyone, including, of course, the administrative officers, has his say. The criticisms are concrete, pointed and publicized, with names named and cases given. It is a universal phenomenon, and, owing to the type of tenure and security enjoyed by the

worker, there is and can be little attempt at measures of economic retaliation, such as firing, lowering of wages, or increasing of hours.

It could not be seriously maintained that these democratic arrangements and processes in the Soviet Union work without flaws, shortcomings and imperfections. There is and has been a serious problem of bureaucracy in the governing apparatus. Compulsion and violence have been applied out of all proportion in the carrying out of certain measures, such as the collectivization of agriculture in 1929–30. The Communist Party and the government have had to acknowledge many a grave error. In short, it is not difficult to discern the usual measure of human fallibility in the U.S.S.R. It is also clear, of course, that in no country so far in history have democratic arrangements and processes, whatever they were, worked without flaw or imperfection.

Bearing in mind this margin between aim and complete fulfillment, it is still of great significance as a principle that the economic democracy found in the Soviet Union thus extends the conception of the rights and freedoms of man to include the right to work, freedom from unemployment. (It might be well to emphasize, in passing, that what the Soviet government offers is an opportunity to work; it does not guarantee support to any individual able but disinclined to work.)

However, the question might be raised, is this really an extension? Does not democracy under capitalism also grant its citizens the right to work? There is a sense in which it does, but it is not quite the same sense. The Soviet thinker would maintain that, under capitalism, the right to work might be said to mean, in essence, the right to seek work—a situation which is, in itself, an historic gain over the paralyzing restrictions of the feudal system. However, the state, under capitalism, does not make itself responsible for offering employment to the individual. It assumes no legal obligation to do so. In practice, whenever there

is an unusually acute crisis, the state endeavors to "make work," and offer "relief," but these measures have usually been in the nature of temporary expedients. The state is under pressure to get rid of them as soon as possible.

It is natural to find the state in this position under capitalism. It cannot assume economic responsibility for the individual because it does not exercise operating control of the economic system. It cannot guarantee individuals the right to work because it does not have the power to set up those economic conditions which actually result in doing away with unemployment. It conceives its own role as that of arbitrating class differences, rather than of abolishing classes. It is therefore not strange that this concept of economic democracy, in its fullness is written into no constitution under capitalism, that the right to work is not an obligation which any capitalist government attempts to guarantee in a material sense.[3] The constitution of the U.S.S.R. on the other hand, accepts this obligation and guarantees this right.

"Article 118:/Citizens of the U.S.S.R. have the right to work, i.e., the right to guaranteed employment and payment for their work in accordance with its quantity and quality.

"The right to work is ensured by the socialist organization of the national economy, the steady growth of the productive forces of Soviet society, the preclusion of the possibility of economic crises; and the abolition of unemployment." /

The second paragraph is, without doubt, the heart of the matter. Any guarantee of the "right to work" is, of course, largely formal rather than material unless at the same time economic conditions deliberately calculated to attain this end are set up. Taken in connection with its actual implementation by the basic organs of state power, the appearance of this right may be said to represent a landmark in the history of political philos-

[3] Increasing mention of the "right to work" may now be found in various constitutions under capitalism. No material guarantee is offered, however.

ophy. It raises a new series of problems that will be debated for generations.

DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION

How is democracy construed in relation to education? If one should speak of a right to education, one might again be inclined to say, there is nothing new in such a conception, nothing that could be called a distinctively socialist contribution, for citizens under capitalism also have the right to avail themselves of all educational opportunities. However, there are somewhat different conceptions of right involved. The Soviet concept accepts an obligation to set up an entire system of education, from the earliest grade through university and professional training, free of charge for the entire student body of the country. In addition, an obligation was undertaken to pay a stipend to the vast majority of students beyond the secondary level to take care of their general living expenses. This stipend was paid to about 90 per cent of such students in 1939. The impact of the war situation resulted in certain modifications of this system. While the free tuition and stipend arrangements were retained for training connected with war needs, higher and secondary students in other fields, unless their grades were superior, or they fell into certain economic or military categories, paid a tuition fee. It remains to be seen what arrangements will be worked out for the period of post-war reconstruction.

The U.S.S.R. can thus claim to be the first country in history to set up such a system on a nation-wide scale. While it is not unusual, among the leading capitalist countries, to find a widespread system of free education through the secondary level, a social achievement which represents a great contribution to democracy, free higher and professional training is the exception rather than the rule. This type of education is, on the whole, in the hands of private or semi-private agencies which generally

have the right to set up those entrance qualifications, financial and otherwise, which they see fit. These qualifications, besides aptitude and previous training, may include barriers of race, religion, and sex, the imposition of which is frequently protected by law.

It might be said that in the capitalist situation, the emphasis in principle, is on leaving the field open to different philosophies of education, among which the citizen can choose, provided he can meet the financial and other requirements involved. In the socialist situation, the emphasis, in principle, is on eliminating financial and other barriers in respect to education and training that is based on one philosophy.

The Soviet constitution formulates its concept as follows:

"Article 121: Citizens of the U.S.S.R. have the right to education.

"This right is ensured by universal, compulsory, elementary education, by the fact that education, including higher (university) education is free of charge; by the system of state scholarships for the overwhelming majority of students in the higher schools, by instruction in schools being conducted in the native language, and by the organization of free vocational, technical and agronomic training for the toilers in the factories, state farms, machine tractor stations and collective farms."

Besides the Russians themselves ("Great Russians") there are more than 175 distinct ethnic groups in the Soviet Union, some 40 in statistically significant quantities. This astonishing number of national minorities of various colors would ordinarily offer fertile soil for the growth of concepts of race superiority and inferiority. In the Soviet system there is a remarkable equalitarian treatment of these groups in respect to entrance into educational institutions. During the period when educational facilities were limited, there was an open and legal discrimination in favor of the working class and against the children of the former nobility and bourgeoisie. With the growth

of the educational structure, these restrictions have been completely removed, and the "social origin" of the individual is not inquired into.

The situation under capitalism, as it has developed historically up to the present point, involves a kind of clash of two systems of right. On the one hand, there is the right of educational institutions to bar individuals of certain races and nationalities, on the other hand, the right of members of these groups to an education. Democracy under capitalism has so far generally allowed both these rights to stand in the abstract, as a matter of principle, permitting either or both to be fulfilled, in accordance with the material possessions and powers of the two parties. That is, if a member of the minority being discriminated against has enough of these resources, he will succeed in obtaining higher education in spite of all obstacles, and if, on the other hand, the discriminating institutions can maintain themselves in spite or because of their discrimination, then they continue to exist.

In the Soviet conception of democracy, the state itself enters into the situation, and, having decided that the right of individuals to receive an education irrespective of their race or color is a higher right than the right of educational institutions to bar races from entrance, throws the force of its weight on the side of this right and does not allow the other to operate.

The problems of political philosophy would be simple indeed if so many of them were not made up precisely of *conflicting rights*, rights which find themselves in such a situation that if one of them is fulfilled, the other is denied. One contrast between socialism and capitalism lies in the large as opposed to the small area in which the society, through its state, decides which right takes precedence.

If, as sometimes happens, the attitude under capitalism is defended by raising the question, who, after all, is to decide which rights are lower and higher, which moral values should

take precedence, the Soviet thinker is inclined to point out that the refusal of philosophers living under capitalism to commit themselves on these questions does not at all mean that the questions are really suspended or held in abeyance. It only means that when philosophers modestly decide that they do not know the final answers to these questions, interested forces, not suffering from excessive modesty, answer them in practice to their own satisfaction.

Our discussion here has been concerned with the extent and range of educational opportunities. The question of freedom in relation to education and culture, which is also of vital importance to democracy, is taken up in the latter part of this chapter, in connection with the broader political problems.

It might be well to observe, in passing, that there is no ground for the impression which one sometimes meets on a popular level, that people in the Soviet Union are compelled to enter into this or that field of study irrespective of their personal wishes. The choice of the individual's field of study (apart from war conditions and military requirements) is wholly up to himself or herself. There is, however, the requirement that, after completing training in a given field, the individual pledge himself to engage in practice for a period of years (usually five, in some cases fewer) in a locality designated by the government.

DEMOCRACY AND RACE PROBLEMS

In what sense is the Soviet concept of democracy extended to the sphere of ethnic problems? We find the following significant article in the constitution of the U.S.S.R.:

"Article 123: The equality of the rights of citizens of the U.S.S.R., irrespective of their nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life, is an indefeasible law.

"Any direct or indirect restriction of the rights of, or, conversely, the establishment of direct or indirect privileges for citizens on account of their race or nationality, as well as the advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt is punishable by law."

As a conception in moral theory, the idea embodied in this article might be said to be nothing new. But as an organic part of the constitution of a sovereign state, given controlling effect in practice, it is a significant phenomenon.

However, in terms of the constitutional situation, it is not only a question of applying a principle. It is also a question of what principle to apply. For example, while certain constitutions protect the citizen against government discrimination, they also protect the right of a private employer to hire Christians only, or whites only, or white Protestants only. Nor is it illegal, under certain constitutions, for railway companies to have special cars for Negroes, or for communities to set up segregated schools for non-whites. Neither is it illegal for clubs, societies, "fraternities," "sororities," lodges, associations, and groups of all kinds to "draw a color line" or have a race policy. Indeed, in some cases, not only is it not illegal to practice segregation of races; it is illegal not to do so. Thus, in some states, railway coaches are obliged to have separate accommodations for whites and Negroes, and passengers are compelled by law to separate themselves accordingly.

It is interesting to note, in this connection, that New York State has now taken a step in the opposite direction by making it illegal to exercise discrimination on grounds of race or creed in respect to employment. This is a pioneering departure which may or may not be followed by other states or the federal government.

There are thus several constitutional theories involved. Under one, the government promises that it will not enact any legislation which would deprive the citizens of opportunities on

account of race or color, but does not undertake to prevent the exercise of discrimination by citizens or groups of citizens among themselves. Under another, the government stipulates and enforces segregation. Under still another, of which the Soviet policy is an example, the government outlaws segregation or discrimination in any form.

It would be a mistake to think that this policy was implemented in the U.S.S.R. only by measures of legal enforcement. The present remarkable degree of equalitarian practice was brought about by a combination of education and legislation. A widespread and intensive campaign in the schools, press, and theatre was necessary to overcome the situation inherited from the tsarist regime, whose policy was one of suppression and oppression in respect to the extraordinary number of national and racial minorities in the country. For example, conducting schools in the non-Russian languages was, as a rule, illegal. In this regard the educational provision in the Soviet constitution granting the right of instruction in the native language, which extends also to the printing of newspapers, periodicals, and books, is significant. Teaching has been carried on in about 75, and books published in about 100 languages in the U.S.S.R. Alphabets were created for some forty languages which did not previously possess a written form. It is understandable that Soviet thinkers should look upon this whole policy as an application and extension of the principle of democracy.

DEMOCRACY AND THE PROBLEMS OF WOMEN

The Soviet concept of democracy also extends to the field of domestic relations and the whole area of problems concerned with the social, economic, political and cultural relations of the sexes. It is significant in this connection to recall an earlier statement of Engels:

"Hence the full freedom of marriage can become general

only after all minor economic considerations that still exert such a powerful influence on the choice of a mate for life, have been removed by the abolition of capitalistic production and of the property relations created by it. Then no other motive will remain but mutual fondness. . . . Remove the economic conditions that now force women to submit to the customary disloyalty of men, and you will place women on an equal footing with men. . . .

"What we may anticipate about the adjustment of sexual relations after the impending downfall of capitalist production is mainly of a negative nature and mostly confined to elements that will disappear. But what will be added? That will be decided after a new generation has come to maturity: a race of men who never in their lives have had any occasion for buying with money or any other economic means of power the surrender of a woman; a race of women who have never had any occasion for surrendering to any man for any other reason but love, or for refusing to surrender to their lover from fear of economic consequences. Once such people are in the world they will not give a moment's thought to what we today believe should be their course. They will follow their own practice and fashion their own public opinion about the individual practice of every person—only this and nothing more." [1]

Such a passage as this indicates some of the objectives of democracy in this particular field. It is interesting, in the light of them, to examine the present Soviet Constitution:

"Article 122: Women in the U.S.S.R. are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social, and political life.

"The possibility of exercising these rights of women is ensured by affording women equally with men the right to work, payment for work, rest and leisure, social insurance and educa-

[1] *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, pp. 98–100.

tion, and by state protection of the interests of mother and child, maternity leave with pay and the provision of a wide network of maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens."

It is natural to find both Engels' statement and the Soviet practice placing the emphasis on economic factors in the emancipation of women. The Soviet attitude is that the extension of democracy to women involves the willingness to make it a criminal offense for any person or agency controlling employment opportunities to debar women from the enjoyment of equal rights with men except on certified medical or scientific grounds.[2] Here again, the democracy that is operative under capitalism often seems to consist in offering the woman equal rights, and at the same time offering others the right to debar her from these rights. The two conflicting rights then engage in a kind of contest wherein victory goes to the party that can command more material resources in the given case.

We find the same contrast when we investigate opportunities for women to train themselves for entrance into various professions. Quite apart from specific intent and motivation, there is, of course, no more effectual way of barring a given group from entering certain fields than to bar them from entering the institutions which train personnel for these fields. As we have seen, Soviet educational institutions, including professional and vocational schools, are prevented by law from arbitrarily restricting entrance to males.

In the recent past, Soviet educational authorities have been exploring the results of separating the sexes at the elementary and secondary school levels. Impressed by psychological findings indicating different rates of progress as between boys and

[2] A great deal of attention has been devoted in the USSR to the problem of occupations and types of work inherently injurious to women Special institutions exist for the purpose of gathering information and statistics, performing experiments and initiating researches in this field Conclusions arrived at show that comparatively few types of work are actually in this category.

girls at certain age levels, a program of separate study was undertaken in 1943 in 72 cities. This program in no way favors or imputes inferiority to either sex, and the curricula are basically the same.[3]

It need hardly be pointed out that the kind of democracy under discussion cannot exist in practice, nor does its theory receive any very elaborate development, unless the economic system of the society is such as to be able to absorb the labor effort of the country as a whole. If the structure of economic relationships offers obstacles to this absorption, if in other words there is such a thing as involuntary unemployment, then it will naturally be necessary and "only right" for policies of restriction to develop—restrictions of gainful employment to men, to unmarried women, to one in a family, and the like.

Moreover, certain special provisions must be made for women if this policy is not to have an adverse effect on the birth rate. For it should be observed that, while Soviet women are found gainfully employed in a greater variety of occupations and professions than the women of any other country, and probably in a greater ratio to total numbers, this result has not been attained at the expense of marriage or the institution of the family. The rate of increase of the Soviet population was the greatest in Europe before the war, owing in part to the fact that the young woman was not forced to choose between having a family and a "career." Not only could no employing unit (or training unit) refuse to admit her on the ground that she was married, but, as we have seen from the constitutional provision just quoted, she is guaranteed maternity leave with pay, (a total of 77 days) and also has available an extraordinarily large network of nursery facilities. The facilities are in no way compulsory, a point that should be noticed in view of the apparently

[3] *Cf.* Medynsky, Eugene, "Schools and Education in the U.S.S.R.," *American Sociological Review*, June 1944.

widespread but quite groundless impression that children are taken from their parents and brought up in state institutions in the U.S.S.R.

DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS

It appears to be a prevalent impression that Soviet democracy extends in no way to the political field—that it contains no concept of civil liberties or freedoms. Such a view finds no substantiation in fact, unless we consider that our conception of civil liberties is the only possible one. While the Soviet conception is not the same as ours, there are well developed principles which should be given close attention.

Our conception of civil liberty basically turns upon the idea of freedom to oppose the existing order. In this view, the essence of freedom of speech lies in the legal possibility of making a talk or delivering a lecture advocating, for instance, the peaceable overthrow of the government in power, the discontinuance of its policy, and like ideas. Freedom of press consists essentially in the legal possibility of printing newspapers, journals, books, pamphlets and the like, for public sale or distribution, containing "oppositionist" ideas. Freedom of thought or conscience likewise is considered to consist essentially in the legal possibility of setting up schools, churches, study groups or other associations for the cultivation of certain ideas, even though they be opposed to the "existing order." The same applies to freedom of assembly. Central to this whole notion of political freedom is the idea of a "legal opposition." The freedom in question is that of moving against the government in power, or the existing regime, in the realm of speech, print or thought.

The Soviet conception, on the other hand, might be summed up, not as freedom to move against the existing socialist order, but freedom of movement within that order. Freedom of press,

for instance, is not conceived of as the legal possibility of publishing material opposing the socialist regime, but rather the freedom with which the people as a whole can actually obtain and read newspapers, journals, books and printed materials of all kinds. A very important consideration is, of course, the cost of these materials. Hence it is significant to note that the prices of such articles in the Soviet Union are extremely low—probably lower than anywhere else in the world. In spite of a relative shortage of paper, printings are in very large quantities. Freedom of the press also means the availability to the people of the press itself, that is, printing facilities, as well as opportunities to write and to learn to write. The masses are deliberately drawn into literary activity of all kinds, and effective measures are taken to adjust the economic factor at all levels so that it will be as little of a barrier and as much of a help as possible.

In like fashion freedom of thought seems to mean to the Soviet philosopher the degree to which the people of his society are actually free to cultivate their minds, to gain higher education and training, to assimilate and possess the cultural heritage of mankind. As we have observed, the economic factor is of great importance in this regard. One might recall the remark of Sidney Webb to the effect that, so far as the actual purchasing power of the majority of Londoners was concerned, there might just as well be a statutory provision making it a criminal offense for them to purchase most of the goods displayed in the prosperous shops of Bond Street. If this is true of the consummation of relatively simple economic transactions, how much more true is it of economic transactions requiring the sustained and difficult financial commitment involved in the completion of professional training, or even the attainment of a baccalaureate degree by itself. In having made (before the war situation) all higher educational and professional training not only free of charge, but an activity which carries with it, in process, a financial compensation which allows the individual to provide

for his basic economic wants, the Soviet thinker feels that his society is making an immense contribution to freeing the people from ignorance, and from those bonds which hold back the development of their intellectual and artistic capabilities. He thinks of freedom of speech in terms of the same sort of considerations.

CAPITALIST AND SOCIALIST IDEAS OF FREEDOM

Further light is thrown on the Soviet thinker's conception of freedom or civil liberties by an examination of his reasons for rejecting the conception prevalent in capitalist democracies. Under freedom of press, for instance, the citizen of such a democracy is assured the state will pass no law preventing him from setting up a newspaper or other periodical, or from printing a book in which he may set forth his own individual ideas, however different from or opposed to the received doctrines, provided they do not violate the criminal code. If the citizen has certain of these ideas, but, as usually happens, is a person of slender means, who does not own a newspaper or a publishing concern and has not the capital to purchase one, and cannot persuade someone who does that there will be any profit in the printing and sale of his peculiar ideas, the state does not assume any responsibility to supply what is needed. Such things are the citizen's "own affair." Likewise, if the citizen wishes to reach his fellow citizens by means of speech, through the radio or the lecture hall, the state assures him he is free to do so as long as he has the means to purchase time on the air, to hire lecture and publicity facilities, and so on. Again, he is free to found a school or university and attract followers or educate others along the lines of his ideas so long as he possesses the means to pay for buildings, land, materials, equipment and services.

It is quite clear that such a conception places an immense premium upon the private possession of economic resources. It

means, generally speaking, that people can really avail themselves of such freedom to the extent that they possess such resources. It is to this condition that the Soviet thinker points when he refers to class freedom, or the class conception of freedom, or bourgeois freedom or capitalist freedom. He feels that the sort of freedom offered by his society is the kind that actually meets the needs of the majority of his people. It is freedom from what actually does hold them in bondage, not freedom from what might hold them in bondage if they should become wealthy dissenters.

It is when we inquire into freedom *from what* that we approach close to the crux of the entire problem. It might not be too much to say that terms like liberty and freedom have no meaning at all until it is clearly understood "from what." In themselves these terms might be regarded as negative in the sense that they point to the absence of something, of some form of compulsion. The whole point is, what form of compulsion. It is to this aspect of the matter that Lenin directs attention when he writes:

"We wish to create and we shall create a free press, free not only in the police sense of the word, but free from capital as well, free from careerism, and free, above all, from anarchic bourgeois individualism." [1]

Lenin knew exactly the kind of criticism that would be raised, for he proceeds:

"These last words may seem to the reader to be a paradox or a mockery. What! cries some intellectual, a passionate lover of freedom. What! you wish to collectivize a subject as delicate and individual as literary creation! . . . You deny absolute freedom to the absolute individual creation of the mind!

"Calm yourselves, gentlemen. . . . We have to tell you

[1] "Party Organization and Party Literature." Translated in *Dialectics*, New York, No. 5.

that all your talk about absolute freedom is nothing but hypocrisy. In a society based upon the power of money, . . . there can be no real and actual 'freedom.' Writer, are you free from your bourgeois publisher? This absolute freedom is nothing but a bourgeois or anarchist phrase. . . . It is impossible to live in a society and yet be free from it." [2]

While the latter paragraph pointedly exemplifies the Soviet thesis in regard to theory and practice, we are at present concerned, not with the difference between theory and practice, but rather with the much less discussed and more confused problem of the difference in theory itself between the Soviet democratic conception of freedom or civil liberties and the capitalist democratic conception. Many seem to be under the impression that it is the avowed intent of Soviet constitutional principles to guarantee to the individual the sort of political freedom that is associated with the name of Thomas Jefferson, and that their only professed difference from capitalist countries in this regard is that the Soviet Union claims it practices this freedom, whereas capitalist countries only preach it. Such a view is profoundly mistaken. The Soviet thinker feels that he has a different theory from that of Jefferson. While fully recognizing that Jefferson's principles were a radical, revolutionary, and historically necessary doctrine in connection with the growth of capitalism and the overthrow of feudalism, he feels that the passage of time and the transition from capitalism to socialism have generated new problems that call for new principles.

The civil liberties of democracy under capitalism all tend in the direction of freedom from interference by the state. This is the heart of the matter. This is what is "guaranteed" in the democratic constitutions within this economic system. Capitalism, in order to develop, had to break away from the state interference of feudalism. It was afraid of a strong state and cen-

[2] *Ibid.*

tralized control in terms of what these things signified in the feudal order. All it wanted was to be left alone because it saw that, given "free" markets, a "free" labor supply, and a "free" field to buy and sell—"free," that is, from interference by the state, it would be able to grow and develop.

It is clear, however, that such is not the relationship of the socialist economy to the Soviet state. To assume that the socialist needs freedom *from his state* as a matter of principle would be to miss the whole point of a planned economy and of socialism in general. The Soviet state does not regard itself as a neutral policeman whose business it is to keep "order" amongst a conflicting variety of fundamental aims and objectives. Rather, it regards itself as an institution cooperating in the building of a definite kind of society committed to positive objectives shared, if not by all, at least by the vast majority. But could this not be said of the democratic state under capitalism? Not in the same positive sense. The essence of the democratic conception in a competitive, individualistic society is precisely that there shall be no one positive, "official" objective binding upon all. There need be no one positive social philosophy for all, no one positive world view, no one positive set of ultimate values.

We keep repeating the word positive because it is the crux of the matter. There is a sense, of course, in which, if all agree that there shall be no one binding objective, that is, in itself an objective of a sort; if all agree there shall be no one social philosophy, world view or set of values, that in itself is a kind of philosophy. The sense in which this is so is negative. That is, so far as the society as a whole is concerned, the philosophy consists in the agreement to have no one unified philosophy, the objective in the agreement to have no one binding objective. Individuals and groups have positive objectives, positive philosophies, positive values, but the state or society as a whole is not

supposed to have any. It is supposed to be neutral, tolerant of all. Whether it attains to this in practice is, of course, another question. We are here discussing the theory itself. As a theory, the door is open to all objectives, philosophies, values.

Soviet society is in a very different situation. It is no longer seeking and undecided in respect to its immediate and ultimate objectives. It has committed itself to a positive goal. It has a very definite idea of the kind of life it wishes to build. That is to say, the *society* has a philosophy, a world view, a set of values. In the light of these conditions, it can *plan*, not only in economic, but in all phases of social life. Under these circumstances it not only can plan, but must plan in order to realize itself. One of the functions of the state is to implement these social plans. The Soviet individual would not wish to be free from the society in which he lives, even if that were possible, because of his view of what society is and should be. He does not want to be let alone by the state, but on the contrary, insists that the state perform the kind of function which it alone can perform towards the realization of the common social goal.

Soviet artists or intellectuals, for example, do not ordinarily regard it as an unwarranted intrusion if their work is criticised from the socialist viewpoint. They are usually interested in criticism and evaluation from that point of view. Their general feeling, so far as I was able to judge, is that they would like to make a contribution to the civilization growing up around them. Hence, the mixture of indignation and amusement felt by Soviet figures, like Shostakovitch, Vavilov or Deborin, who, when they are involved in controversies and criticisms of this sort within the Soviet Union, become the objects of solicitous attention on the part of the non-socialist press in other countries, which rushes to their defense in order to rescue them from intolerable violations of their liberties, blandly attributing to these Soviet figures the whole psychology of the bourgeois

man. The Soviet thinker can hardly be blamed for suspecting that this sort of thing comes about, not because our press loves the criticised socialists more, but because it loves socialism less.[3]

Is there any "moral obligation" at work in relation to the type of freedom each society offers? It may be said that there is. Probably one reason why capitalist society feels an obligation to grant freedom from state interference is because it cannot and will not make the state responsible for the conditions of life of the individual. It cannot assume this responsibility because it does not possess control of the basic means on which the conditions of life of individuals depend. Hence, under these circumstances, it is felt that one contribution the state can make to the individual is to let him alone to improve his own lot as best he can. Soviet society, on the other hand, through its state, possesses and controls the means on which the living conditions of citizens depend. It therefore feels it possible and necessary to make different promises, of a different character, and thus to guarantee to the citizens a different kind of freedom. It follows also, that to preserve that type of freedom the capitalist type must be rejected. If we are to speak in moral terms, we might say that a planned economy has a moral obligation to prevent interferences with the plan, whereas an unplanned economy has a moral obligation not to interfere with the freedom of the people for whom it does not plan.

Article 125 of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. states:

"In conformity with the interests of the working people, and in order to strengthen the socialist system, the citizens of the U.S.S.R. are guaranteed by law:

[3] When a certain American newspaper published a false report to the effect that Academician Vavilov had been "arrested" because his work was criticised. Vavilov sent the paper a telegram in which he said, in part: "This is not the first time I have read false reports about myself in certain sections of the foreign press. Lies about Soviet science and Soviet scientists who are conscientiously working in the cause of socialism have become the specialty of certain organs of the foreign press." *Moscow Daily News*, December 23, 1936.

(a) freedom of speech;

(b) freedom of the press;

(c) freedom of assembly, including the holding of mass meetings;

(d) freedom of street processions and demonstrations.

"These civil rights are ensured by placing at the disposal of the working people and their organizations printing presses, stocks of paper, public buildings, the streets, communications facilities, and other material requisites for the exercise of these rights."

It will be noticed that the freedoms offered in this article are specifically conditioned by the needs of the socialist system, which alone, it is felt, can secure the interests of the working people. As we have seen, the view taken is that the attempt to construct this system under Russian conditions imposed economic, moral and cultural tasks which were incompatible with the functioning of an opposing political party. It is an historical fact that the Russian socialist regime from the start had to contend with an unprecedented combination of external and internal enemies and difficulties. Not only did armies of the most powerful capitalist state, such as Britain, France, the U.S.A., and Japan intervene and lend their support to the "white" Russian groups trying to overthrow the Soviet state; the conditions within the country amounted to a gigantic social breakdown. The tsarist state, backward even in times of peace, was, after the defeat in the first world war, completely disorganized and desolated. Revolution, civil war, famine, disease, crippling of industry, breakdown of transport, interruption of social services—it was in this complex of circumstances that the Soviet regime took power. It is significant to note that probably every one of these circumstances would have come about whether the Bolshevik party had existed or not. Even the revolution which overthrew the Tsar was not the Bolshevik uprising, but that which put the Kerensky group in control. It is difficult to see

how anything short of large scale, long time social planning could have pulled the Russian people out of such a difficult situation. It probably would have been hopelessly difficult if the political life of the country, with all that that involves, had remained split into a number of antagonistic political parties solidifying and encouraging opposition in respect to the basic objectives themselves.

The Soviet individual usually thinks of his political life in terms of a "struggle," in which the country must stand politically united in order to survive. It is well known that in times of war, the actual conditions of the conflict make it necessary to prohibit advocacy of the abandonment of the struggle, or the organization of a group pledged to the belief that the enemy is right and ought to triumph. Under these conditions a kind of "one party" system is seen as an inescapable necessity. That is, there can only be "one party" in relation to victory in the struggle. There is no doubt that the Soviet leaders considered their country to be in a situation of life and death emergency, comparable to a war crisis. The alternatives were the carrying through of large scale plans, counting on a certain unified effort of the population, or national catastrophe. The period between the first and second world war abated, but did not do away with the critical position of the Soviet state. It continued to be threatened by powerful capitalist states, isolated by a *cordon sanitaire*, often boycotted diplomatically and economically. It hardly enjoyed a sense of international stability or security; the atmosphere of impending military crisis persisted up to the time of the actual German attack.

The tendency amongst political thinkers in the capitalist world to treat freedom from the state and "state control" as a kind of absolute is thus one with which the Soviet thinker has little sympathy. To him it seems clear that whether or not this kind of freedom is in the best interests of the people is entirely

a question of the stage which social evolution has reached, the content of the given historical situation, and the demands of that situation in respect to its onward movement. It seems to him clear, as it does to many others, that the capitalist state is the kind of state from which, under certain historical conditions, one needs freedom. But it is not clear to him that it follows from this that one needs freedom from any and every state.

For example, the historical justification of the overthrow of the medieval system, and the demand for freedom from the state consisted in the fact that the feudal state and its whole system of society had became incapable of attaining the welfare of the people. It became incapable not because the welfare of the people eternally and mystically consists in being "free" from the state in which they live, but because the feudal structure was not able to meet the actual concrete needs and possibilities presented by the development of the system of production on which the life of man depends. Capitalism then meant expansion, growth, the fulfillment of these needs and the realization of these possibilities. However, capitalism itself passes through an evolution, and the time arrives, it is held, when it becomes increasingly incapable of meeting the needs and possibilities presented by the further development of the productive forces. Unemployment and technological frustration are, of course, regarded as basic examples of this condition. Socialism believes and has always believed that it can meet these needs and possibilities through the fact that planned economy and the social ownership of the means of production would result in economic security, an economy of increasing abundance, a richer cultural life for all the people and the consequent elimination of the causes for racial and national discriminations. From this point of view, therefore, the historical justification of the one party system in the Soviet Union is the same as that for the rise of the

multi-party system, namely, that it is a necessary instrumentality for meeting economic, cultural and social needs at a certain stage of development. The only absolute is the welfare of the whole people, considered, however, not in some super-historical and super-material sense, but in connection with the historically evolving material system in and through which alone man can live.

In other words, it might be said that the purpose of freedom from the state, when it is necessary, is to make it easier to build a better society. It may turn out, however, that the kind we wish to build can only be built through the extensive participation and sustained cooperation of the state. It seems quite logical to the Soviet thinker to regard freedom from the capitalist state as a prelude to building a socialist society which will possess the sort of state from which people will not desire to be "freed."

It should be kept in mind that this point has reference to socialism. As we shall see in more detail presently, the apparatus of state force would be expected to die out from lack of use after a world wide transition to communism.

THE SOVIET AND FASCIST CONCEPTS OF FREEDOM

The socialist naturally wants to be free from the inadequacies of capitalism. He is convinced that, to accomplish this result, the socialist state, once it comes into power, must undertake responsibilities of a kind that capitalist states never undertake in order to accomplish ends never accomplished in capitalist society. In order to discharge these responsibilities, the socialist state must enact policies the execution of which, under certain conditions, would not be possible through a multi-party system. It is clear that this line of reasoning, far from justifying the one party system of fascism or nazism, constitutes a thorough condemnation of it. From the Soviet point of view, the peculiar

viciousness of the nazi-fascist regime consisted in this, that it attempted to perpetuate itself by destroying all political opposition and by creating a one party system, while at the same time it retained the basic structure of private capitalism, the class divisions of society, the privileged aristocratic cultural system and an egregiously aggravated system of racial and national discrimination. The fact that the fascist or nazi state "controlled" employers must be understood in the light of the basic fact that it retained the *class* of employers and the *class* of workers with all the privileges and antagonisms that this situation implies. It is easy to see where the center of gravity of the nazi-fascist system lay if we raise the question what each class gave up to it and got from it. The employing class, without ceasing to be the employing class, gave up a certain freedom of economic action, but in return received the promise of retaining its privileged status in perpetuity. There would be no more strikes, militant unions or working class revolutions, above all, never communism, the socialized ownership of "their" means of production. The working class gave up its militant unions, its strikes, its socialist or communist activity and got in return the status of a poor employed class in perpetuity. In other words the overwhelming advantage to the employing class consisted precisely in the fact that neither class was abolished.

Nothing could be farther from the whole tenor of Soviet philosophy. Nothing could be farther from the idea of economic democracy, and it is significant to recall, in this connection, that fascist ideologists bitterly attack democracy, the idea of democracy itself and not only its capitalist form. As we have seen, they openly and explicitly favor the conception of aristocracy. Among them, the very term democracy is one of reproach. Fascism is sometimes called organized capitalism; it might be added that the attempt was certainly to organize it aristocratically. The Soviet political philosopher, reasoning

dialectically, historically, feels himself much closer to capitalist democracy than to fascism. In the case of the former, he feels himself confronted with a system which does not *a priori* rule out the possibility of a further development of its democracy in economic, cultural and racial fields, whereas in fascism he sees a system which unalterably opposes itself to any form of democracy and would perpetuate an "aristocratic" organization of society.

This rejection of democracy in principle, and the espousal of "aristocracy" is emphasized throughout Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, and the separate volume of his speeches published as *My New Order*. Hitler is very clear on the idea that the application of his aristocratic principle to economics involves a capitalist national economy. He never departs from the idea that the economy should be capitalistic. He insists only that it should be a *national*, not an *international* economy. Why, then, did he call his movement national *socialism*, since there is not one good word for the actual doctrines of socialism in the whole of his writings, and, on the contrary, the harshest abuse whenever he refers to them. Incredible as it may seem, it may well be for essentially the same reason that he chose the color red for party purposes. He explains in *Mein Kampf* [1] that it was chosen as a provocation to his greatest enemies, the Socialists. It was to "annoy and irritate" them—naturally, since it was their color. And, of course, both term and color had great prestige among the German workers. One would have said that it could not be possible for the mere attaching of a label to mislead anyone when the actual contents of a two volume work, in the most emphatic and explicit detail, are the opposite of the label—were it not for the fact that one may observe serious "thinkers" and responsible "statesmen" accepting and referring to nazism as a form of "socialism," citing objections to nazism as objections to "socialism," and identifying socialist tendencies and

[1] P. 506, Reynal and Hitchcock ed.

movements in countries like America or Britain with the essential nature and doctrines of German National "Socialism."

STATE AND TOTALITARIANISM

It must be emphasized that throughout this discussion of political principles, we have kept primarily in view the present stage in the development of the Soviet Union—that period known as socialism, (or the "lower phase of communism") which forms the transition from capitalism to communism proper (or the "higher phase of communism"). During this transition, the socialist state, as Marx pointed out, "can be nothing else but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat," [1] not because the proletariat alone finds a dictatorship necessary, but because, as the word is used in Marxist literature, any state is and must be a dictatorship. That is to say, the term dictatorship connotes, not exclusively the one party system, but the idea of any apparatus of physical force (jails, prisons, police, army), for use against the citizenry. Such a dictatorship is considered necessary so long as society is split up into classes with their consequent antagonisms. Problems arise, conflicts break out which, evidently, can only be "settled" by the use of force. In one sense, the chief function of the capitalist state is to maintain capitalism, and, with it, that system of economic relationships which permits the legal existence of a capitalist class wielding great economc power. The proletariat, on the other hand, can really raise its conditions of life to a humanly satisfactory standard only by abolishing classes, in other words, by making sure there will be no proletariat. Hence, the chief aim of the socialist state is to bring about this result through replacing individual with socialized ownership of the means of production, and by various concomitant measures. It is, of course, not only the remnants of classes within the Soviet Union that

[1] *The Gotha Program.*

make necessary the existence of an apparatus of state force, but antagonistic classes and states outside the Soviet Union. It is obvious that the concrete reality cannot be defended with the same weapons as the abstract idea.

While socialism is evidently possible in one country, protected by a strong state, it is expected that world wide socialism would pass into communism proper, or the higher phase of communism, and would then be able to dispense with the state. In other words, the total abolition of classes would make it possible to eliminate the type of conflict among groups in the population that necessitated the use of an organized apparatus of physical force to "keep the peace" and "restore order." The administration of things would continue to be necessary, as Engels points out,[2] but not the repression of persons. In the presence of an economy of abundance, the dictatorial aspect would gradually die out, and a system of stateless administration would emerge. The feeling is that if the primitive communists could live without police and jails, civilized communists might do the same. When this point is reached, not only the state ceases to exist, but the Communist "Party," and the whole "party system" whether it be single or multiple. The transition from socialism to world wide communism is thus a qualitative one, generating new problems which contemporary Soviet thinkers are content to leave, in their details, to those who will know them concretely.

Could the Soviet Union, as a socialist society, be said to have a totalitarian state? It would be easier to answer this question if the word totalitarian were given a precise meaning. Most of those who use it apply it as a term of abuse, meaning that Soviet society is essentially like fascism or nazism because of the existence of a one party political system. In this regard we are confronted by the same situation which we have already examined in connection with the term dictatorship: a radical difference in

[2] In Anti-Dühring.

aims, policies and motives underneath the superficial similarity of forms.

Mussolini, for instance, in *The Doctrine of Fascism*, wrote:

"The fascist conception of the state is all-embracing; outside of it, no human or spiritual values can exist, much less have value. Thus understood, fascism is totalitarian . . ."

He evidently referred to the "state" in its strict sense, and not in the loose sense of a synonym for society at large, as he added in the same work:

"Fascism does not deny the state; fascism maintains that a civic society, national or imperial, cannot be conceived unless in the form of a state."

It is clear that nothing could be further from the whole Soviet and Marxian position. As we have seen, that position involves the view that the state, as an apparatus of force (and it was precisely this aspect of it that Mussolini placed in the forefront, as the embodiment of the aggressive, militaristic and imperialistic spirit, which, to him, was the chief criterion of a nation's worth) is a passing phenomenon. The view taken by Engels was that there was a time (in primitive communal society) when state government did not exist, and there will be a time in the future (under world wide communism) when the state, as a governing apparatus utilizing force, will no longer be needed. The Soviet concept, far from representing the state as the locus of all human and spiritual values, actually regards it as a kind of necessary evil, the vanishing of which will mark a qualitatively higher phase in the evolution of human society.

If the term totalitarian means, given to planning, then it would be properly applied to the Soviet Union, which, of course, is distinguished by its planning. In such a definition, however, there would not necessarily be any invidious moral connotation, for surely planning in itself is not reprehensible. There may be good plans as well as bad plans, and there are evidently times when a society must plan or perish.

Probably to the average reader of the daily press a totalitarian society means one in which the individual is "regimented" in every sphere of his activity, in which official decrees from above dictate to him what work he must do, what recreation he must take, where he must live, what he must eat, what he must study, and the like. The conclusion that the Soviet Union is such a society could hardly be arrived at by observing Soviet life or examining Soviet principles. It could only be arrived at by assuming, first, that the U.S.S.R. is something called "totalitarianism," and second, that "totalitarianism" must be the sort of thing that has just been described. While abundant evidence shows that this method of "reasoning" is exceedingly popular, a moment's reflection will show that it is practically worthless.

THE QUESTION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The question of religious freedom is dealt with in a separate article in the Soviet Constitution:

"In order to ensure to citizens freedom of conscience, the church in the U.S.S.R. is separated from the state and the school from the church. Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda is recognized for all citizens." [1]

We see here once again an interesting contrast between the Soviet democratic system and a democracy like our own. Broadly speaking, our state stands on the principle of freedom of religions in the sense that the state itself promises not to establish any one religion as official and not to interfere with any sect by way of preventing it from worshipping, or from propagating its views and attracting followers. But our state could hardly be said to stand on the principle of freedom *from* religion. It is not neutral about religion itself, religion in general. Its official literature contains abundant evidence of its religious

[1] Article 124.

orientation in the form of prayers, references to a Deity, invocations of Divine blessing, Divine guidance and the like. There is no doubt that the state, so to say, believes in God. Official oaths are taken in the name of God, and even in relation to one particular sacred writing—the Bible. Hence it is that atheists, agnostics and others can by law be barred in many cases from giving testimony in court in various states. Not only houses of legislature, conventions of political parties, and official gatherings of all sorts, but the public schools as well, set aside time for prayer and other communication with the Deity. While it is true that clergymen of various sects are usually invited in turn to lead such services, it is also true that they are not followed by an atheist or an agnostic so that he can give expression to his views. While our state is not officially sectarian, it does not hesitate to characterize itself as a religious, or a God fearing, or even a Christian state, and to refer to itself as a guardian of religion, or even as a protector of Christianity. While the state does not compel citizens to believe in God, it does not itself hesitate to proclaim this belief, and lend encouragement to it, not only spiritually, but materially as well, by placing church properties in an especially privileged position in respect to public taxation.

In the U.S.S.R. the state also grants freedom of worship to all sects. (It is interesting to note that, in consequence of this freedom, a greater number of sects operate than were permitted under the tsarist regime, which, of course, had an established church, which it placed in a favored position.) The Soviet state also has a partisan orientation on the question of religion, only its convictions lie in the opposite direction. It does not believe in God, and is of the opinion that the theological outlook on life is intellectually false, and socially backward, and hence, spiritually restrictive. Consequently, what it is particularly anxious about is that its citizens should enjoy the opportunity of freedom from religion. In the past, it has meant that, while freedom of religious worship was guaranteed, freedom of anti-religious

propaganda [2] was also guaranteed, but not freedom of religious propaganda. That is to say, it was not possible to set up a school for the training of clergymen, or to establish missions or other societies for the advancement of religion. On the other hand, any group of people who so desired might conduct religious services, and be ministered to by a cleric so long as they themselves footed the bills. Also, a practicing clergyman could train an assistant, and parents could teach religion to their own children. The state offered no economic privileges, but on the other hand, dealt out no penalties. At the same time, economic and other encouragements were offered to anti-religious propaganda. Such propaganda took the form of lectures, scientific demonstrations, pamphlets, books, journals, films, clubs, associations and the like, so far as it was organized. In general, the direction of this propaganda, in line with the fundamental philosophy, was to supply a positivistic, scientific world outlook rather than a super-naturalistic or theological one.

However, as a result of the war situation, important changes have taken place in the Soviet policy towards the church. Various opportunities for religious expansion and development have been granted, among which are the setting up of institutions for the training of clergymen, the election of central authorities of the Orthodox Church, and the possibility of giving organized religious instruction to children. Moreover, organized anti-religious propaganda has been largely abolished. The central "Society of the Militant Godless" has been disbanded and its periodicals have been discontinued.

Evidently the Soviet government has been convinced, through the loyal support given its war policies by the religious groups, that these groups are no longer anti-Soviet, as they were in the years after the Revolution. In those early years a bitter

[2] The word propaganda in the Soviet Union, as on the continent generally, does not mean something that is necessarily false or malicious. It means information spread with a definite object in view.

struggle between the powerful established Church and the Soviet state was inevitable. The Church, of course, identified itself with the tsarist regime. Since church and state were one, it was impossible to strike a blow at the one without striking a blow at the other—a situation similar to that in the French Revolution of 1789. The Russian Orthodox Church placed its influence, prestige and strength on the side of the tsarist regime, and fought the Soviet government with every weapon at its disposal. It did not scruple to espouse and support the cause of the armed enemies of that government in the period of intervention and civil war.

While there is thus a new rapport between state and church in the Soviet Union, the government shows no tendency to go back to the system of a state church, or even to the system of indirect government subsidy of religion. It also shows no tendency to compromise in regard to its own fundamental philosophy, which, as we see, is humanist and materialist rather than supernatural or mystical. In this connection religion is still regarded as the "opium of the people." The view is that it has traditionally and predominantly attempted to meet the problems of the sufferings of the masses here on earth, not by a thorough going attempt to abolish the social and economic conditions, the whole class system (including the slave system) out of which a large part of these sufferings have arisen, but rather by promises of rewards after death, and by counselling resignation and humility in this life.

The Soviet concept of spiritual values, and the whole attitude towards ethics which, in a sense, underlies its political philosophy, is dealt with in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

SOVIET ETHICS: SOCIALIST HUMANISM

In the sense in which ethics is a social problem (indeed, *the* social problem) much that we have already discussed in the field of social and political philosophy throws significant light on the basic ethical attitudes of Soviet society. It has been amply evident that this social philosophy which we have discussed is not the sort which claims or wants to separate itself from the field of ethical values. As we have seen, it does not merely observe the course of development of society and the struggle of contending forces, forecasting the outcome in an attitude of amorality or indifference. It sees priceless value in society, regards the goal toward which it moves as a higher stage in the life of humanity, and considers worthwhile the struggles necessary to attain the goal.

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that socialism and communism are regarded as ethically desirable, in the light of the basic criterion of a more abundant material and cultural life for all. Concretely, this standard entails the abolition of economic insecurity, crime, prostitution and illiteracy, the lowering of the rate of infant and industrial mortality, and the elimination of racial and national discriminations, restrictions and prejudices in regard to economic, social and political opportunities. Such principles as, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work" (socialism); "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" (communism); "He who does not work, neither shall he eat" (quoted in the Constitution of the U.S.S.R., Article 12) clearly involve moral valuation, ethical criteria.

BOURGEOIS AND SOCIALIST HUMANISM

The whole body of ethical teachings in Soviet philosophy is usually referred to under the term, socialist humanism, (or proletarian, or Soviet, humanism). How is this humanism to be distinguished from the older doctrine of the same name? In one of his essays Maxim Gorky addresses himself to this question. The socialist conception, he says, "is not the humanism on which the bourgeoisie but recently prided themselves as the basis of their civilization and culture. . . . The word is the same, but the meaning is utterly different. This humanism which appeared about five hundred years ago, was a means of self-defense for the bourgeoisie against the feudal lords and the church. . . . When the rich bourgeois, manufacturer or merchant spoke of the "equality" of men, he understood by this his own personal equality to the feudal parasite in knightly armor or in a bishop's vestment. Bourgeois humanism existed amiably side by side with slavery, slave trading, with the 'law of the first night,' with the Inquisition. . . ." [1]

Speaking of the attitude of this humanism towards early revolutionary movements originating in the lower classes of society, Gorky says:

"The bourgeois humanists aided the feudal lords as assiduously in the destruction of Wat Tyler's peasant army, the French 'Jacques,' the 'Taborites,' as the cultured profiteers of the twentieth century who coldbloodedly and ferociously slaughter the workers in the streets of Vienna, Antwerp, Berlin, in Spain, in the Philippine Islands, in the cities of India, in China, everywhere. . . . In general, the bourgeoisie has never tried to alleviate the life of the workers by any other means than charity which robs the worker of his dignity." [2]

[1] "Humanism and Culture" in *Culture and the People.* International, New York, 1939 Pp. 212–213.

[2] *Ibid.*

Gorky's historical approach to the question is significant. The historical materialist has never regarded the problem of ethics as an eternal problem of which the philosopher must find one eternal solution, rejecting as worthless all others that have been offered in the course of history. Neither does he deny the existence of an absolutely valid ethical standard, binding upon all. As we shall see in greater detail when we discuss the class point of view in ethics, his position involves what he would consider, in his sense of the term, a dialectical unifying of relative and absolute elements.

It is clear that the nature of the existing social institutions, the concrete historical context, conditions the extent to which ethical standards can approach universal applicability, or, in other words, the extent to which people can participate in the good. For example, bourgeois humanism, at the time of its emergence, represented a considerable step beyond feudal principles, in the sense that it stood for the inclusion of greater numbers in the circle of those who could actually lead the higher life. It meant an actual as well as a theoretical extension of moral values and human rights. In essence, it meant that it was not necessary to be a feudal noble in order to attain human worth and dignity. The gates were opened to the bourgeoisie; it would be more exact to say the bourgeoisie forced open the gates. This step represented an immense advance for humanity, and was, of course, gained at the expense of no little bloodshed, revolution and warfare. In social terms it meant the coming to power of the bourgeois class, a fact which the feudal nobles resented, to use delicate language. They did not retire gracefully; they did not cooperate with history. But in the end they were compelled to retire because the movement of historical forces involved in the development of technics, the growth of production, the expansion of trade, the grasping of opportunities and fulfilling of demands set by geographical and other

discoveries was bound up, not with the class of landed nobles, but with the urban bourgeoisie.

But there was nothing in the movement of these basic forces which made it necessary, or perhaps, even possible to include the masses of the people—serfs, peasants, manual and commercial workers—among those who *must* be cultured, who *must* be called to the more worthy stations, who *must* try to lead the *higher* life. On the contrary, as the problem presented itself to the bourgeois class, exactly what it needed was a large supply of cheap, mobile labor living near or at subsistence level under the pressure of competition. It even needed, in Marx's vivid phrase, a "reserve army" of unemployed which could be drawn on in accordance with the fluctuating demands of capitalist enterprise. Under these conditions, as we have seen, it was necessary to transform the serf into a wage laborer; and this was done. That change expresses the historical gains and limitations of the bourgeois movement: the "common man" ceased to be a serf, but became a wage laborer. The situation was one in which it might be said, in a rough ethical calculation, that the mass of the people had to remain at the level of wage laborers so that the small minority capable of aspiring to the best in life could be increased by the bourgeoisie to a large minority. It is important to note that the nature of this process no more prevented the bourgeoisie from making use of the people in the vanguard of its fight against feudalism, or including them in the eloquent equalitarian declarations which pragmatically applied only to itself, than it prevented human slavery, or the jeopardizing, in various profitable ways, of the health and lives of wage workers.

ETHICS AND CLASSES

Thus, the older humanism, like all ethical attitudes and doctrines, is seen to be connected with the play of class forces. If

any such phenomenon as a class struggle exists, it would be strange indeed if it did not affect the origin and development of something so pertinent to the social activity of people as codes of morals. No class in power could afford to tolerate a code of ethics according to which its own exercise of power would be condemned as bad, except, indeed, on condition that the code be wholly confined to "theory," having nothing to do with "practice." By the same token, no class which aspires to power could be expected to leave unchallenged and untouched an ethical code in terms of which its aspirations are judged as illegitimate or immoral. There are always thinkers who express the needs of the times, although they may not be personally connected with the prospering class of the times. For we must note once again that the prosperity of such a class is not only its own good fortune, but is also the good fortune of society as a whole. Such a class carries the burden of social advance for the time being.

In the light of these considerations we see clearly how the process by which a given class influences, modifies, suppresses or encourages ethical views, although always in a certain sense selfish, is by no means necessarily hypocritical or conspiratorial. In general, all classes are sincere in the belief that their interests coincide with the interests of civilization. However, as we might expect, the historical materialist is not content to leave the matter in this subjectivist impasse. Although he is disposed to admit that there is perhaps a sense in which very many classes *at one time or another* have been the vehicle of social progress, he points out that there is a judge of contending classes, history, whose verdicts, although sometimes debatable, are always implacable. After all, there are plenty of objective facts demarcating the path of human evolution. Those who would deny, for example, that feudalism was overthrown without, however, abolishing the slave trade, or that the introduction of capitalism actually increased the volume of economic production without,

however, preventing the phenomenon of mass unemployment, may be ignored without running too grave an intellectual risk. Has human society undergone an evolution which, however far from a smooth, straightaway ascent, has been characterized by greater and greater productivity, in which a more abundant life is thus made possible? Has human society undergone an evolution in which the degree of participation by the whole human family in the values created by society has been different at different times? If such questions can be answered in the affirmative, there is a basis for evaluating the role of this or that class during a given period, in accordance with its part in this evolution.

Thus the historical materialist views the past in terms of historical relativity to outcomes and values which are, in the last analysis, absolute, and which may be crudely expressed in such a formula as, each for all and all for each. A principle of this kind is taken as absolutely valid, morally binding upon everyone, upon all classes. In Soviet philosophy, or Marxist thought generally, we do not find a situation, as many have erroneously "deduced," wherein the class point of view in ethics is taken to mean that each class, with its own ethics and its own viewpoint, is as right as any other class. On the contrary, there is only one ethics that is wholly right, and class analysis means an investigation of the extent to which the activities made necessary by the position and the nature of the interests of a given class during a given period, further or retard the realization of the highest ethical values. In other words, the interests and position of one class may motivate it to strive towards such values, while the interests and position of another class may motivate it to do the opposite.

If we raise the question, then, why does the historical materialist hold that socialist ethics is superior to bourgeois ethics (keeping in mind that such a question must be understood socially, in terms of the combination of theory and practice),

the answer is clear: the evolution of modern society, he feels, has reached the point where individualized ownership of the means of production stands in the way of economic security for all. It stands in the way of the utilization of that abundance of goods, the availability of which to the individual is the precondition of normal participation in the "higher" cultural, scientific and esthetic life. The view taken is that the ethicals ends desired by the great majority can only be brought about on the basis of collective ownership of the forces of production. Hence, under ordinary conditions, it is considered that those who further the interests of that class which embodies the control of capitalist economic relationships, whatever their verbal protestations, are placing obstacles in the way of the actual realization of the values mentioned. On the other hand, the position of the working class is such that, in order effectively to improve its own conditions, it must struggle for collective ownership of the means of production. Short of this, all that can be hoped for is that a minority of its members will rise into the bourgeois groups, which in no way solves the basic problem. Once there exists anything like a proletariat, its only real salvation, as Marx pointed out, is to abolish itself. But the only way it can abolish itself is to abolish all classes. Thus, what makes the position of the working class so significant, so pregnant with ethical value, is the fact that it cannot satisfy its human urge to lead a decent life without transforming society from a class to a classless basis, the very transformation which society needs in order that everyone may lead a better life.

In a classless society everyone leads an ethically higher life because the operating social and economic institutions no longer compel people to exploit one another, to follow those patterns of action which, even without malice prepense, nevertheless do result in economic insecurity and lack of higher culture for the great mass of the people. In one type of socety, there are certain social sins you cannot help committing, whereas in another type

of society, there are certain sins it is impossible to commit. However, it is important to note that, whether or not the individuals in the capitalist "upper classes" would themselves feel that they would be leading a better life in a classless society, they do feel, in the main, that it is possible for them to enjoy a decently human existence under capitalism. They have at least a relative security, a relative abundance, and a variety of cultural opportunities. Only the working class cannot "get along"; it is the only one that is motivated, in any large and compelling way, to unclass society. If this could have been said of some class other than the proletariat, then men like Marx and Engels would have thrown in their lot with that other class, and oriented their policy in terms of its action.

Thus the proletarian class is seen as moving towards classless ethics both in theory and practice, towards the realization of such a principle as, each for all and all for each. Its material interests coincide with the implementing of the higher morality. Other classes, so long as they follow their material interests, can at most talk classless ethics, while moving in practice in the other direction.

THE RELATIVE AND ABSOLUTE IN ETHICS

It might be well to add a further word about relative and absolute considerations. It is amply clear from our previous discussion that the absolute factor involved in the basic ethical values is by no means regarded as something mystical or *a priori*. On the other hand, the relative element has nothing in common with the familiar *chacun à son goût* attitude, which regards the selection of fundamental values as hopelessly subjective. The historical materialist believes in absolute right in the same way as he believes in absolute truth, as an objectively existing state of affairs to which our accumulating knowledge and practice become a fuller and fuller approximation, relative because there

is something for them to be relative to. Belief in an absolute right is evidently not the same thing as a belief that our knowledge of it is absolutely correct.

The Soviet philosopher is convinced that a rational examination of man, of his physical and psychological characteristics, *taken together with his social history*, gives us a reliable clue as to his possibilities of development, as to ways and means whereby all can share in the values possible of attainment. If anyone should ask him how he "proves" that it is better for all, rather than for merely a few, to partake of the good life, or how he "proves" that it is better to be healthy than diseased, to have a sufficiency of food, clothing and shelter rather than a deficiency, to enjoy economic security rather than to suffer insecurity, to develop understanding of and participation in art, science and the cultural heritage of mankind, he would probably be puzzled that anyone should require a "proof" of these things. For better or worse, the historical materialist prefers to spend his time with the problem of how such values may be universally attained, in relation to the basic movement of historical forces. He suspects, if not the intentions and conscious motivations, at least the actual social consequences of prolonged philosophizing about whether life is better than death, or whether knowledge is better than ignorance. His starting point is that life is worth while and that man is a gregarious animal with a future that flows out of his past. The general experience of mankind and the results of scientific investigation seem to make this starting point in ethics as valid as the starting point of any other field of intellectual endeavor.

ETHICS AND THE INEVITABILITY OF VICTORY

In relation to ethical issues in Marxian thought, more than one critic has called attention to what he considers an inadmissible contradiction. That is, while the historical materialist re-

gards the goal as worth while, and the struggle to attain this goal as morally justified and even mandatory, he at the same time believes in the inevitable attainment of the goal. In other words, at the same time that he counsels workers (and, in a larger sense, everyone—although he does not expect that his counsels will always be heeded) to struggle, on moral grounds, against class, and for classless, society, he undertakes to tell them, on scientific grounds, that the advent of classless society is inevitable. The critic is usually unable to reconcile these two things, holding that if the victory of socialism is inevitable, then there is no reason for the workers to struggle, or, on the other hand, that the group or party which tells the workers they ought to struggle can have no rational grounds for believing that their victory is inevitable.

The difficulty here is probably a psychological one, growing out of unfamiliarity with the context of subject matter. The historical materialist would point out that the form of his logic is in no way different from that of a physician who says, to a patient: "There is no doubt that you will recover from your ailment. You should do so and so." If the patient protested, saying, "Since my recovery is certain, why should I do those things—I will just do anything I please"; the physician would, of course, reply: "Your recovery is certain precisely because of the course of treatment I am recommending, among other factors; I say your recovery is inevitable because I know that in the vast majority of cases, sick people take their medicine; they wish to live, and they act accordingly." In the same way, the Marxist prognosticator tells people they ought to struggle as one of the factors in their social salvation, and also believes they will struggle and emerge victorious.

The physician's reasoning is based on the best scientific knowledge available concerning the laws of human biology and pathology, or, in other words, on what has been observed in the past in this field of phenomena. We may say that his judg-

ment represents the balance of probability scientifically arrived at. This is exactly the sort of claim the historical materialist makes—that his prediction is justified in the light of the best scientific evidence available concerning the laws of development of the capitalist system and of human psychology. He asserts that, like the physician, he would be quite willing to modify his judgment should a further development of scientific method reveal new or hitherto unknown factors in the situation which would point to a different conclusion. At present he feels justified in reasoning as follows: given the social conditions generated by capitalism, and the reactions of human beings as evidenced in the past, there will spring up a party urging a struggle for social reconstruction; this struggle will take place, and in time triumph.

Are we here in the grip of fatalism? We are certainly in the grip of causation (what is not?), but it would hardly seem to go as far as fatalism. For example, it would be quite possible for some patient, given a suitable background, to "refute" the physician by doing the opposite of what he suggested, and thus preventing himself from recovering. Likewise, if a whole society, or a class within society felt strongly enough about the matter, it might possibly commit some form of collective suicide, or endure, without taking steps to eliminate it, some source of suffering which ordinarily it would not tolerate, for the specific purpose of "refuting" the prediction that it would act the other way. People may indeed possess this sort of "freedom," but we can hardly expect them to exercise it very frequently. It is a practically negligible factor among the scientific probabilities in terms of which social prognosis would operate.

MEANS AND ENDS

Another point frequently raised concerns the position that is assumed to exist in regard to means and ends in Soviet ethics.

The Soviet view is often thought to separate them sharply, and to accept more or less bluntly the proposition that the end justifies any means. In this connection it is sometimes urged, especially by pragmatists or "instrumentalists" that ends cannot be separated from means, that when certain means are employed, they become in fact part of the results or ends actually brought about. For example, it is pointed out that we must be extremely chary of using means which in themselves are unacceptable, in order to attain laudable ends, because the means used carry over into the ends actually produced, thus lowering their value. In this view, it is held that Soviet ethics or politics, when it sanctions the employment of revolutionary or forceful measures is forgetting that force and violence involved in such means carries over into the end itself.

The Soviet philosopher, however, does not feel that the criticism offered applies to him in view of the fact that he has always emphasized, in accordance with the whole tenor of his thought, the dialectical interpenetration of means and ends. In fact, it is this very consideration which he is prone to urge in criticism of those who deplore widespread human misery, and advocate higher ends, but who have no practical program for the attainment of these ends. The commitment to higher ends is held to have singularly little pragmatic or instrumental value in the absence of efficacious means. Under these circumstances, the ends to which one is really committing oneself are the ends brought about in the given situation. By the same token, the means one is actually permitting are the means which bring about those ends. Bad ends spell bad means just as surely as bad means spell bad ends. In other words, from the Soviet viewpoint, the problem boils down to a choice between the prolonging of one interrelated means-end situation, or the substitution of a different means-end complex. The question, which the Soviet thinker raises is, what is the road of less violence and suffering, all things considered.

It is well to recall here the point stressed earlier: the Soviet or Marxian position is that revolutionary measures are justified only when the government refuses to carry out the wishes of the majority. There is no tendency to condone the use of force where the majority have peaceful means to carry out their will.

If ethics is a social study, its essential content may be seen in the functioning society which is considered acceptable, not in the sense that nothing better is hoped for, but in the sense that nothing better is brought about. If the Soviet philosopher tends to regard as morally responsible for capitalist society the codes of ethics and schools of philosophy which flourish under it and do not oppose its basic features, or fail to struggle against them, if he tends to judge these theories in terms of the total resultant social practice, he is also quite willing to have his own ethics judged in the same way. What is meant by practice here is, of course, the broad, basic, determining conditions that are operative. We may indicate the same thing by speaking of "principles" so long as these express the conditions actually operative and what is reasonably implicit in such conditions—barring merely wishful thinking or benevolent hopes unconnected with functioning programs.

Thus the essence of the matter might be said to lie in the willingness of Soviet society as a whole to assume responsibility for the conditions of life of the citizens in the sense of deliberately organizing all the basic institutions in the light of certain planned consequences. In ethical terms, the *society* is regarded as responsible. This does not mean that the individual is not responsible, or that his ethical status is automatically guaranteed because he lives in a socialist society. Such an attitude would involve a mechanical divorcement between the individual and the social which is contrary to the whole dialectical methodology. At the same time it is felt that, in large measure, the question of whether the individual will work out his ethical destiny

is a question of the type of social institutions operative, that the sum total of the individual's behavior, good or bad, is conditioned by the institutions in and through which he must act.

This fact is widely recognized by philosophic and social thinkers, especially in terms of the complex conditions of modern life. For example, we find in the well known work on "Ethics" by John Dewey and J. H. Tufts:

"When social life is stable, when custom rules, the problems of morals have to do with the adjustments which individuals make to the institutions in which they live, rather than with the moral quality of the institutions themselves. . . . If anything is wrong, it is due to the failure of individuals to do what social customs tell them to do. . . . When social life is in a state of flux, moral issues cease to gather exclusively about personal conformity and deviation. They center in the value of social arrangements, of inherited traditions that have crystallized into institutions, in changes that are desirable. Institutions lose their quasi-sacredness and are the objects of moral questioning. We now live in such a period." [1]

Such a phrase as "the moral quality of the institutions themselves" exactly expresses what the Soviet thinker regards as a concept of central importance, although his reaction to it is considerably different from that of a philosopher like Dewey. The former feels that the institutions of his society are morally superior to those of capitalism because they make it possible for more people to lead better lives. It is necessary to judge institutions as well as men, for while men make institutions, it is also true that institutions make men. Not only do men make, but they unmake and remake institutions. This sense of fluidity and changeability of social arrangements is also a point emphasized by both Dewey and Soviet philosophers. However, the latter regard Dewey as weak both in the lack of a basic pattern of insti-

[1] Pp. 347–348. Holt, New York. Revised ed.

tutions to serve as a goal, and in his estimate of how institutional changes are actually brought about. To them it would seem that a thinker like Dewey is so struck with the fact of social change itself that the further problems are never satisfactorily dealt with.

ARE SPIRITUAL VALUES DENIED?

If we raise the question of the attitude of Soviet philosophy, in terms of its materialist conception of ethics, towards what are sometimes called spiritual values, the answer is clearly implicit in our previous discussion. If by the term spiritual we mean to refer to the realm of culture, education, art, and science, then, as we have seen, it would be a very serious error to suppose that the ethics of historical materialism is in any way negative or deprecatory towards this area. On the contrary, it is amply evident that the ethics of socialism places such a conception of the "spiritual" in a very central position. The good life, as conceived by the historical materialist, is always identified with a life of higher culture and education. At the same time, it is felt to be in no way incompatible with this emphasis to stress also the values of physical health and an abundance of material goods. One is not surprised to discover, in fact, that Soviet philosophy constantly asserts the close relationship, the interdependence of these two realms; bodily health is considered to promote and aid the normal development of "spiritual activity" and such factors as economic security and material resources are considered to be of service in like manner.

Thus materialism in ethics does not consist in denying or rejecting the "spiritual" considered as the intellectual, the artistic, the cultural. It consists rather in understanding the spiritual in terms of the activities of human beings in relation to the world of nature, as a function of matter in its qualitative rich-

ness. It obviously involves no lack of appreciation of the esthetic emotions or the intellectual powers of man; it simply refuses to regard them as mysteries for which it is necessary to invoke the supernatural or the inexplicable. It insists that they are a natural though complex function of the human organism in its relations with the normally experienceable universe around it. In taking this position it conceives that it is not lowering the value or dignity of the arts and sciences, but raising that of man and nature.

The basic issue in regard to "spiritual" values which has always separated materialist from non-materialist thought, is the source and nature of them, not their worth. It is felt that their worth is not adversely affected by tracing them to man, nature and society rather than to superhuman or supernatural sources. It is considered, moreover, that those who regard their worth as depending on such sources betray a certain lack of appreciation of the intrinsic content of the phenomena themselves, as well as a lack of confidence in mankind and in the possibilities of the natural world. Soviet ethics is literally humanistic in that it sees the source and significance of all values in mankind.[1] It feels that reference to any supernatural or mystical

[1] It is interesting to note attention being given to these matters in Soviet psychology, especially in terms of recent developments in that field. *Cf.* S. Rubinstein, "Soviet Psychology in Wartime" in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, December, 1944, translated from the Russian journal, *Pod Znamenem Marxizma*, Nos. 9–10, 1943. Commenting on the necessity of recognizing the reality of moral motives, and of subjecting them to genuine psychological analysis rather than attempting to explain them away merely by reducing them to "organic needs and elementary sensual appetites," Rubinstein writes. "To satisfy his own needs, man must make the satisfaction of social needs the direct goal of his actions. In this way, the ends of human action are diverted from their immediate connection with his individual needs and—at first obliquely, mediately—what is important for society begins to determine his behavior. In principle, this implies that transition to new, specifically human forms of motivation which are both genetically connected with organically conditioned needs and qualitatively diverse from them. . . . The socially important, becoming the personally important while still remaining the socially important, arouses in the individual tendencies and forces of great strength." Rubinstein's 600 page treatise, *Osnovy Obshchei Psikhologii* (*Principles of General Psychology*), Moscow, 1940, is a landmark in the contemporary development of Soviet psychology.

factor is scientifically unjustified, clouds the issues, and leaves an opening for anti-social forces to take advantage of the credulity of uneducated people. While, as we have seen, this humanism is realistic in its grasp of the measures of social reconstruction which must be a prelude to any effective ethical gains, it has no lack of faith in the possibilities and capabilities of man. It does not feel that the nature of people is such that they inherently require the threat of punishment or the promise of reward in a future life in order to be good in this one. It does not feel that they must forever have their rules of conduct presented as the commands of an unquestionable, omnipotent Being in order that these rules may seem to possess binding force. Its reliance is on science, on the possibilities of education in an economically healthy world where class divisions are absent and security may be taken for granted. Lenin, for example, as we have seen in our discussion of political philosophy, looks forward to a time when the special apparatus of state force embodied in such agencies as jails, police, and the like, will no longer be necessary.

MATERIALIST ATTITUDE TOWARDS DEATH

Question is often raised in regard to such a humanistic outlook, as to whether the consolations of religion are not necessary in the face of the evils and misfortunes of life, and especially such an irremediable fact as death. To examine the Soviet response to such questions, one could not do better than to turn to Gorky, who writes in his essay "On the 'Good Life' ":

"Death is an evil in that it strikes fear into men and makes some of them spend their valuable energies on a 'speculative' philosophical investigation into the 'secret of death' . . . Death is an evil in that, from fear of it, the human imagination has created gods, the 'other world' and wretched fictions like Paradise and Hell. . . .

"Like all the phenomena of our world, death is a fact which should be studied. Science is studying it more and more closely and diligently, and to study is to master.[1]

"Life has something to thank death for—it destroys everything that is played out, everything that has outlived itself and become mere ballast on the earth. People will point out that death does not spare children, a force which is yet undeveloped, and often destroys adults who have not yet exhausted their powers. Often people with remarkable gifts and of value to society die in their youth, while mediocrities and jackasses live to a ripe old age; parrots, for instance live to be a hundred and over. All this is true. But these melancholy facts are by no means due to the 'blind, elemental, invincible power of death' but to unhealthy and abominable conditions of a social and economic nature. The cause of the premature deaths of socially valuable people is usually physical exhaustion, which, in its turn, is a result of the rapacious, 'proprietary' attitude which looks upon man as mere labor power, which should be 'used up' quickly, before another proprietor gets hold of it. It is a well known fact that tens of thousands of manual workers and clerical workers are worn out before their time, and perish from a basely cynical and, very often, stupidly intense exploitation of their powers.

"People die of cholera, typhus, malaria, tuberculosis, plague, etc. But, after all, there is no reason why the germs of these diseases should exist in 'cultured states.' There is no reason why, around magnificent cities, there should be dense rings of squalid suburbs where the houses are packed with people as cess-pits are with garbage. Luxurious hotels are not so socially important

[1] It is interesting to observe that Soviet science has so far taken the lead in researches on the revival of organisms. "By far the most thorough research on resuscitating the dead has been conducted in Soviet Russia A leader in this work is V. A. Negovski, who has published a monograph on his successes and failures which is appearing in installments in the *American Review of Soviet Medicine*." *New York Times*, July 29, 1945.

as good hospitals. It is tiresome having to repeat such elementary axioms, but, apparently, this has to be done in the interests of illiterate people." [2]

THE SOVIET APPROACH TO SEX PROBLEMS

An area to which much attention has been devoted in the modern ethical tradition of the western world, in popular as well as technical treatment, is that of sex conduct, marriage, and related problems. In fact, to very many people, such terms as "morals" and "virtue" connote almost exclusively the observance of certain restrictions in matters of sex. Soviet ethics has also developed its own characteristic attitude in these fields, which, both in theory and practice, has gone through an interesting history since the early days of the Revolution. Lenin had evidently thought much about these problems. We are told by Clara Zetkin, who discussed them with him in 1920, that he expressed himself in part as follows:

"You must be aware of the famous theory that in communist society the satisfaction of sexual desires, of love, will be as simple and unimportant as drinking a glass of water. . . .

"I think this glass of water theory is completely un-Marxist and, moreover, anti-social. In sexual life there is not only simple nature to be considered, but also cultural characteristics, whether they are of a high or a low order. In his *Origin of the Family* Engels showed how significant is the development and refinement of the general sex urge into individual sex love. The relations of the sexes to each other are not simply an expression of the play of forces between the economics of society and a physical need. . . . Of course, thirst must be satisfied. But will the normal man in normal circumstances lie down in the gutter and drink out of a puddle, or out of a glass with a rim greasy from many lips? But the social aspect is most important of all. Drink-

[2] *Culture and the People*, pp. 72–75. International, New York, 1939.

ing water is, of course, an individual affair. But in love two lives are concerned, and a third, a new life, arises. It is that which gives it social interest, which gives rise to a duty towards the community. As a Communist, I have not the least sympathy for the glass of water theory. . . ." [1]

It is not surprising to find Lenin insisting that the problem be approached from the social as well as the individual side. It is not to be assumed, however, that his views on the question were unopposed. On the contrary, at that time, Lenin's position was rather that of a critic of current tendencies at a time of great social ferment, when all the traditional values, standards and mores, both good and bad, were being challenged. It was a time when the popular writings of Madame Kollantai were lending support to the "glass of water" theory, while figures like Bukharin and Krylenko seemed to anticipate some sort of "dying out" of the family.

One need hardly point out, however, that Lenin's position, now regarded as authoritative, did not involve either a defense of asceticism or an acceptance of the "traditional" attitude towards sex relations.

"I don't mean to preach asceticism by my criticism," he says. "Not in the least. Communism will not bring asceticism, but joy of life, power of life, and a satisfied love of life will help do that. But in my opinion the present widespread hypertrophy in sexual matters does not give joy and force to life, but takes it away. In the age of revolution that is bad, very bad.

"Young people particularly need the joy and force of life. Healthy sport, swimming, racing, walking, bodily exercises of every kind, and many-sided intellectual interests. Learning, studying, inquiring, as far as possible in common. That will give young people more than eternal theories and discussions about sexual problems and the so called 'living to the full'. Healthy bodies, healthy minds! Neither monk nor Don Juan nor the

[1] Zetkin, Clara, *Reminiscences of Lenin*, p. 49. International, New York.

intermediate attitude of the German philistines. You know young comrade—? A splendid boy, and highly talented. And yet I fear that nothing good will come out of him. He reels and staggers from one love affair to the next. That won't do for the political struggle, for the revolution. And I wouldn't bet on the reliability, the endurance in struggle of those women who confuse their personal romances with politics. Nor on the men who run after every petticoat and get entrapped by every young woman. . . .

"The revolution demands concentration, increase of forces. From the masses, from individuals. It cannot tolerate orgiastic conditions, such as are normal for the decadent heroes and heroines of D'Annunzio. Dissoluteness in sexual life is bourgeois, is a phenomenon of decay. The proletariat is a rising class. It doesn't need intoxication as a narcotic or a stimulus. Intoxication as little by sexual exaggeration as by alcohol. It must not and shall not forget the shame, the filth, the savagery of capitalism. It receives the strongest urge to fight from a class situation, from the communist ideal. It needs clarity, clarity, and again clarity. And so I repeat, no weakening, no waste, no destruction of forces. Self-control, self-discipline is not slavery, not even in love." [2]

The key to the ethical significance of Lenin's position lies in the phrase, "Neither monk nor Don Juan *nor the intermediate attitude of the German philistines.*" His rejection of licentiousness is evidently not based on any "other worldly" scale of values, or on any sense of innate sin or supernatural sanctions in respect to sex conduct. On the other hand, his rejection of monkish asceticism does not proceed from the irresponsibility of "free love." Lenin wished to do away with the "other worldly" orientation and also with its over-compensation, and to approach the whole problem from a higher level where none but human and social considerations will determine standards

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 50–51.

and mores, but where, for that very reason, certain disciplines are necessary. It appeared to Lenin that the paramount considerations were those set by the necessity of consolidating the power gained by the Revolution and of building a new society. It is here, of course, that he departed from the "philistines."

The subsequent history of Soviet practice in these fields seems to have borne out Lenin's view. It was found that the early tendencies towards laxity and promiscuity, encouraged by an attitude of indifference on the part of the state towards the number of divorces or the frequency with which given individuals divorced and re-married, placed obstacles in the way of socialist construction. They hindered rather than helped the attainment of the ethical values of a socialist society, especially in terms of the position of women and children. All too frequently the result was that irresponsible men took advantage of the so-called "post card" divorce, and disappeared, leaving with their divorced mates the problem of an anticipated but unwelcome child. This in turn increased the practice of abortion, which reduced the birth rate and took its toll of the health and maternal possibilities of numerous women.

As a result of these and other conditions, important changes have been made in recent years.[3] While no artificial obstacles, such as excessive financial prerequisites, have been placed in the way of divorce, the procedure is now a more complex one, in which the state, through various agencies, tries to ascertain what the situation is as between the two parties, and makes an attempt to reconcile them. Moreover, a much stricter procedure is now followed after the legal action has been consummated. The number of divorces which an individual has obtained may be more readily ascertained by others, and the individual's place of employment is called upon to exercise a greater degree of cooperation in enforcing financial responsibilities in connection with

[3] *Cf.* Rose Maurer, "Recent Trends in the Soviet Family" in *American Sociological Review*, June, 1944.

children of previous marriages. At the same time the system of practically free and unlimited abortion has been drastically modified to the point where abortion is now possible only in cases where it is certified as a necessity on grounds of health. Accompanying these regulations were provisions for a much larger network of maternity facilities, nurseries, kindergartens and the like, maternity leave from work, with pay, before and after childbirth, and economic benefits for large families. While these arrangements have by no means worked perfectly, or solved completely the various problems involved, they have made great improvements in the situation.

These changes were naturally bound up with a reorientation of theory, a reorientation which had the effect of bringing the discussion back to the full force of the implications of Lenin's early position. The social aspects of sex behavior, the whole area of parental responsibility, the importance of the family in terms of its unique role in the building of socialist and communist society—all these considerations were emphasized as never before.

PROSTITUTION

In these as in other fields, the attitude of Soviet philosophy is determined by the nature of the basic human and social objectives which it places before itself. In regard to the problems we have been discussing, some of these objectives are forcefully stated in the passage from Engels concerning the position of women in communist society which we examined in our discussion of socialist democracy. As we had occasion to observe then, the economic emancipation of woman is regarded as the only fruitful basis from which the other moral and social problems concerned with her welfare can be approached. Such a problem, for example, as prostitution, has, in a relatively short time, been practically solved in the Soviet Union by approach-

ing it from the economic side. Beginning with an exceptionally difficult heritage from tsarist Russia, where prostitution had been legal under police supervision, the Soviet strategists directed their attack "not against the prostitute, but against prostitution." This meant doing away with the conditions which produced prostitution and supplying the conditions that would afford the possibility of a normal life. Basing their efforts on the attainment of economic security, on the fact that continuous employment at satisfactory wages could be guaranteed everyone, institutions were set up which undertook the rehabilitation of prostitutes, medically, culturally, and economically. In these prophylactoria, the former prostitutes are trained and introduced into productive employment. An effort is made to teach them how to participate normally in normal life, both in work and recreation. When their course of medical treatment is successfully completed, they are sent out to take their places in the productive system of the country, secure in the knowledge that no economic discrimination can be exercised against them.

These efforts were accompanied by remarkable psychological and educational campaigns among the prostitutes and the general public. The object of the first was to persuade the women to enter the prophylactoria voluntarily and the object of the second was to get the public to see the whole problem as it was seen by the authorities, to enlist their active aid, encouragement and sympathy, and to get them to accept the reclaimed prostitute as a normal, worthy member of society. Both types of campaign have achieved very significant success. It was necessary to convince the prostitute and the public that they must not approach the situation in terms of personal sin or guilt, but rather in terms of the cure of a dangerous disease. One should not be ashamed and hide, but rather be proud of the achievement of winning back to health. Very much the same approach, both economic and educational, is used to deal with criminals.

The Soviet critique of the older conventional methods of

handling such problems is implicit in Lenin's rather sharp remarks on "The Fifth International Congress of Combating Prostitution" (1913):

"Recently the fifth international congress for combating the white slave traffic was held in London.

"Duchesses, Countesses, Bishops, parsons and all sorts of bourgeois philanthropists displayed themselves at this congress. There was no end of ceremonial banquets and sumptuous official receptions. There was no end of solemn speeches on the harm and shame of prostitution. But what were the means of struggle which the elegant bourgeois delegates demanded at the congress? The main two means were: religion and the police. These, they said, were the surest and safest means against prostitution. . . . An English delegate boasted of the fact that he had introduced in Parliament a bill providing for *corporal punishment* for pandering. There he is, the modern 'civilized' champion of the fight against prostitution!

"A certain Canadian lady expressed her enthusiasm for the police and for the women police surveillance over 'fallen' women; as for raising wages, however, she remarked that working women do not deserve better pay.

"A German parson fulminated against modern materialism, which, he said, was spreading among the people to an ever greater extent, and contributing to the spread of free love.

"When the Austrian delegate Gertner ventured to mention the social causes of prostitution, the want and misery of working class families, the exploitation of child labor, the unbearable housing conditions, etc., the speaker was silenced by hostile shouts!" [1]

SEX IN THE POPULAR ARTS

Before leaving the field of sex problems, it might be well to touch upon a further matter which again illustrates the con-

[1] Lenin, V. I., *Women and Society*, p. 30. International, New York, 1938.

nection between morals and social factors: the problem of the pornographic, the obscene, the salacious, as it enters into the popular arts and public life. It is a significant fact that in the Soviet Union this phenomenon, like prostitution, is practically non-existent. There is no class of periodicals, popular or otherwise, which "specializes" in this commodity, nor is it observable as an element in the newspapers, periodicals and books of a general character. The vulgarized exploitation of sex themes which forms such a considerable proportion of the total production of motion pictures in other European countries and in America is likewise almost completely absent from Soviet films. The same is true of the legitimate stage; there is also no type of theatrical entertainment corresponding to "burlesque" in its various forms.

It is a tribute to the power of habit and social conditioning and an illustration of the ease with which social custom is mistaken for natural law, that so many people, on being apprised of these facts, which are easily verifiable, exhibit extreme incredulity, suspect that some sort of fraud is being practiced upon them, or, at the very least, are certain that Soviet periodicals and books cannot have much circulation, nor the theatre much patronage. Yet the fact is that the figures of book printings and periodical circulation reach, as it has often been put, "astronomical" proportions, while the normal condition of cinema houses and theatres seems to be to have every seat taken.

It is doubtless amply clear from the foregoing discussion that such a policy in respect to the popular arts and public life is not grounded on any form of asceticism, other-worldliness or puritanism. There are no reservations about sex as such. It is the vulgarized exploitation of sex themes, and the disproportionate pre-occupation with them that are objected to, in the name, for one thing, of normal sex relations and genuine virility.

As the Soviet thinker analyzes the situation, the over-

emphasis on sex themes, and the salacious treatment of them are usually traceable mainly to two factors, both of which are basically economic in nature. One is that the vulgarized exploitation of sex becomes a "big business." Hundreds of publications backed by large capital investments develop the field for the profits that may be made. As economic entrepreneurs, they have the "right" to do this. Evidently, such laws as there are in respect to these matters still permit more than enough latitude for large scale commercial operations. Moreover, "public opinion" is not generally favorable towards increasing the severity of such laws, or even, in many cases, their enforcement. It is felt that such action would smack of censorship, and as such is construed as a violation of liberty running contrary to democratic principles. Moreover, the advocacy of increased severity is associated with "blue law" or puritanical tendencies which condemn sex on principle, a view which is not shared by the vast majority of people. These people thus find themselves in what the Soviet philosopher's terminology describes as a "contradiction" of capitalism. On the one hand they recognize the fact that the salacious element in the popular arts is of negative effect, esthetically and psychologically, and that it would be better to eradicate it. Since their inherently laissez-faire conception of democracy precludes government censorship while at the same time it permits private profits to be made out of the sale and distribution of the "sexy" materials, practically the only course of action that seems left open is to appeal, on cultural and educational grounds, to the industries concerned. But these appeals commonly have little effect. The industries point out that they are, after all, industries, with large capital commitments, and responsible to the stockholders who are naturally seeking to make a profit. They argue that they only sell to the public what the public wants, and the fact that the public buys vulgarized sex shows that it wants it. Teach the public to want something better, they say, and then we will be glad to give it

to them. Thus the "buck is passed" to the school, the church and the family. But churchmen, parents and especially educators have long since realized that the popular arts which flourish in the press, motion pictures and radio *form* as well as satisfy the taste of the public, especially the younger sections of it; *create* its wants as well as satisfy them.

Here again we find ourselves in one of those significant areas where social and political philosophy, esthetics and ethics all meet and vitally affect one another. It is the Soviet philosopher's claim, as we have seen in previous chapters, that such an area can only be fruitfully dealt with when, in the first place all these lines of influence are operating in harmony with, instead of pulling against, one another, and, in the second place, when there is a rapport between philosophic theory and social practice.

Doubtless many will feel impelled at this point to raise the question which we have noted in previous discussions as a characteristic reaction of political philosophy under capitalism, namely: who is to say, after all, what standards are right, what should be suppressed. This question, usually regarded as rhetorical, is considered further justification for the policy of taking no decisive action in respect to the treatment of sex themes in the popular arts. As we have had occasion to observe, this reasoning seems doubly inconsistent to the Soviet thinker: on the one hand this attitude is not and cannot be consistently carried out in the field of social problems generally. That is to say, the fact that no one can claim absolute knowledge in respect to crimes and punishments is not taken as a warrant for refraining from setting up a detailed criminal code. Again, one might ask, as indeed is frequently done, "who can say" whether life is better than death, or health better than disease? Yet the fact, as it is often construed by the possessors of this attitude towards ethics, that "no one can say" does not usually result in the further conclusion that we should relax our public health regulations, or cut down the growth of our hospital system.

The fact is that there is probably no important question in the whole universe of discourse which commands absolute unanimity of competent opinion. However, where it is considered that there is a definite preponderance of competent or scientific judgment that certain things are harmful, this concensus is ordinarily taken as warrant for measures of social control.

It is, of course, the different nature of the society which makes the task of the philosopher and his kind of contribution different in each case. So long as democracy is conceived in essentially laissez-faire capitalistic terms, it does not permit philosophy to assume responsibility for social practice in the large. As we have seen in our discussion of political philosophy, intellectual liberty and freedom are construed as the right of individuals to hold any philosophy, on condition, of course, that they concede the same right to others. It is clear that this sort of arrangement is possible only where the *society* has no philosophy, or, put differently, where the people concerned, by majority agreement or otherwise, have not decided to go ahead, or have decided not to go ahead on the basis of one given philosophy. Since social practice cannot be pinned down to any one philosophy, this situation has the effect of widening the breach between philosophic theory and practice to a point where it is even thought that philosophy disappears where the question of practice is entertained.

Reasoning in this fashion, the Soviet thinker asserts that there is a sense in which, while the philosopher under capitalism is often inconsistent with himself and unable to fulfill his claims, he is profoundly consistent with the nature of his society. Given capitalism which depends on laissez-faire, the cultural system, including philosophy, will necessarily bear a laissez-faire character. However, it is, of course, capitalism and not laissez-faire that is the *bête noir* of the Soviet philosopher. This is pointedly illustrated by the case of fascism, which has abandoned much

of laissez-faire, but not capitalism, and which superimposes upon the essentially capitalist foundation a totalitarian cultural structure. This sort of capitalism and its resultant cultural system is even more antipathetic to socialism than is laissez-faire capitalism. The reason is not far to seek: laissez-faire capitalism, at least in theory, leaves the door open for development. On the basis of its own princples, it is at least conceivable that it might peacefully develop into socialism. Fascism, however, by its very principles, closes the door and shows not the slightest encouragement to the idea of any evolution beyond its present structure and principles.

INDIVIDUALISM, SOCIALISM AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Before leaving the field of ethics, we ought to consider the problem of individuality, and the historical materialist's conception of the individual and his role in society, the more so as it is very frequently assumed, both that socialist philosophy can place no value on individuality, and that Soviet society pays no heed to its development. As we might expect in the light of our discussion so far, these assumptions are not warranted. We may not agree with Soviet theory or practice in respect to individuality, but it is incontestable that there exists a body of theory and a set of far reaching practices explicitly committed to the end of developing the richness of individual character and personality. Such a situation in no sense constitutes a violation of or deviation from the writings of older authorities on socialism.

It is not rich individuality, but anarchic individualism to which the Soviet thinker is opposed. Gorky, for example, writes:

"Individualism is the result of external pressure brought to bear on man by class society. Individualism is a sterile attempt by the individual to defend himself against violence. . . . Class society cramps the growth of the individual. That is why the

individual seeks a place and peace outside and beyond reality. . . ." [1]

In the Soviet Union, Gorky holds, "A new type of man is springing up . . . and his characteristics may already be defined without fear of error.

"He possesses a faith in the organizing power of reason, a faith that has been lost by the European intellectuals, who have been exhausted by the sterile labor of reconciling class contradictions. He is conscious of being the builder of a new world, and although his conditions of life are still arduous, he knows that it is his aim and the purpose of his rational will to create different conditions—and he has no grounds for pessimism. He is young historically, as well as biologically.

"He is a force which has only just become aware of its path and purpose in history, and he is performing his task of cultural development with all the courage inherent in a force which has just begun to function, and which is guided by a simple and clear precept . . . He perceives that the bourgeoisie has shamefully miscalculated in basing itself on individualism, that generally it has not furthered the development of individuality, but has selfishly restricted its development by ideas that overtly or covertly claimed, as an "eternal truth," that its power did not extend to the majority of the people.

"While rejecting the bestial individualism of the bourgeoisie, the new man perfectly understands the profound integrity of the individuality which is closely bound up with the collective body; he himself is such an individuality that freely draws its energy and inspiration from the masses, in the process of the labor of the masses." [2]

Thus Gorky, reflecting the general Soviet attitude, would reject "individualism" just in the name of individuality. The Soviet conception is that the healthiest growth of individual per-

[1] *Culture and the People*, pp. 117–18.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 171–72.

sonality takes place precisely in and through social participation, which is considered highest in a society characterized by collective ownership of the means of production, and a deliberate planning directed towards social objectives. In our discussion of political philosophy we have had occasion to observe the extent to which the Soviet individual participates in the management of basic economic institutions, in planning, and in the periodical critical review of administrative practice.

One of the chief factors underlying the growth of individual personality is, of course, education, the understanding of and participation in the arts and the sciences, professional training and cultural activity. It has been evident throughout our previous discussions that the Soviet system, both in theory and practice, places a great deal of emphasis upon this factor, and has done so since the very earliest days of its regime. Indicative of this emphasis are the extremely widespread opportunities for and encouragements to higher study, the system of free tuition with a stipend for living expenses, the relatively high salaries, and royalties paid to writers, artists, theatrical performers, the prevalence of study circles and art groups of all kinds in a rich diversity of cultures, the growth of the tradition of the Red Army as a school where opportunities for study and training are pressed upon all, and the whole attempt to replace supernaturalistic religion with a reliance upon reason, science, and the creative potentialities of human beings.

CHAPTER IV

THE ARTS: SOCIALIST REALISM

ESTHETICS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF ART

There is a widespread tendency among philosophers under capitalism practically to identify the philosophy of art with esthetics, the terms are frequently used interchangeably. There are, however, very important differences between these two fields, although there is also common ground, each includes a whole area of subject matter and problems not found in the other. Esthetic analysis must apply itself to phenomena of nature as well as to the arts, since beauty, ugliness, sublimity and the like are by no means confined to objects of art. Moreover, the esthetics of art, properly speaking, is only one part of the philosophy of art, and there is no self-evident reason why it should be regarded as the most important part. The origin and nature of art, the part it plays among social institutions, its relationship to ethics and other fields are problems in the philosophy of art quite as important as the analysis of beauty.

We witness here an instance of the great importance, in determining the basic orientation of a school of philosophy, of the problems selected (or accepted without conscious selection) for study. One effect of the tendency to identify the philosophy of art with the esthetics of art has been to make the problem of beauty the central, and sometimes the only, problem of the study. This result has tended, in turn, to load the dice on the side of form, and to encourage from the start a relativistic and subjectivistic treatment. This approach becomes so habitual that

it appears to many to be a logical necessity grounded in the nature of things rather than a man made, humanly motivated selection.

Philosophy of art in the Soviet Union does not tend to restrict itself to the consideration of the esthetics of art. It deals with problems which we find raised in esthetics, such as those of form and content (in its own way, of course) but at the same time raises, and regards as of basic importance, questions concerning the relations of art to the rest of society, in terms of roots and consequences. Nor are these questions divorced from the others. The feeling is, broadly, that none of the problems associated with art can be understood except in terms of the connections of art with the social life of man generally.

WHAT IS ART?

If the contemporary Soviet philosopher were asked to give a brief answer to the question, what is art, his reply would probably be that art is a reflection of reality, a reality that is largely social. What does he mean by this reply? First of all, that the subject matter of art is to a great extent made up of the social life of man, which is a veritable cornucopia whence flow situations, problems, themes, materials, conflicts and struggles with which the artist deals. These things cannot help but be "reflected" in his work. It is not meant, however, that this reflection is in the nature of an inert and passive image which exercises no influence on what it reflects. As we shall see, the influence which it exerts, directly and indirectly, is very important. Even a mirror image can exercise influence. When people look into mirrors, they rarely do so as passive and impartial observers; they are usually prepared to do something, one way or another, about what they see. Shakespeare, when he speaks of holding the mirror up to "nature" clearly anticipates that it will produce a certain effect.

In order to clarify what is involved in the doctrine held at present by most Soviet thinkers, that art is largely a reflection of social reality, it would be well to examine some of the controversial discussions that took place as this conception came to the fore and received emphasis in the thirties. The doctrine which it displaced is now known as vulgar sociology or vulgar sociologism. It would seem, incidentally, that not all of those who discuss this subject outside the Soviet Union are aware of this development of thought, as it often appears to be assumed that Soviet philosophy of art today has the same character which it possessed in the twenties.

One of the best known exponents of the present viewpoint in this field, who played a prominent part in the decisive controversies, is Mikhail Lifshitz. In his well known article, "Leninist Criticism," Lifshitz thus comments on his opponents' views, tracing them in part to Plekhanov's work:

"Can an 'artist aristocrat' reflect the people's movement in his own country? From the point of view of Plekhanov, such an idea is tantamount to the negation of Marxism. . . . Plekhanov conceived of the dependence of literature on social life as the psychological dependence of the artist on his environment. This side of the materialistic interpretation of history Plekhanov developed so one-sidedly that he completely obscured the basic historical fact that art and literature are a *reflection of external reality*, or a mirror of objective, all-sided human practice. In Lenin's analysis [1] of Tolstoy's creative work, however, he proceeded from precisely that very fact.

"The one-sidedness of Plekhanov's 'sociology of art' has exerted a sad influence on criticism and on the history of literature. Plekhanov laid the foundation on which our vulgar sociologists build their schemes. There is a sociological principle to the effect that every artist merely organizes the fundamental psychological experiences imposed upon him by his environ-

[1] Dealt with below. J S.

ment, his upbringing and the interests of his social group. These experiences arise entirely involuntarily, automatically, like the feeling of pain when one cuts a finger. Each class leads an independent spiritual life. It is mournful, jolly, worried about its health, and in general, is given to the most diverse moods. Art merely collects the moods of its class into special reservoirs called artistic productions. In this sense, each artist is *irresponsible.* You can neither convince him nor dissuade him, and, strictly speaking, it is even meaningless to praise or to curse him. He is the rightful psychological product of his environment. In the final analysis every artist can express only his own self, his own life, the life of his class, of his group, of his own stratum, his own dunghill. The more closely we link the artist to this dunghill, the *more exact* and the *more scientific* will be our analysis. Thus, or almost thus argue numerous representatives of 'sociology' more consistently than Plekhanov himself." [2]

Lifshitz then goes on to give nearly as trenchant a criticism of this "sociological" viewpoint as could be found anywhere It would be curious to see how many, reading it without knowing the identity of its author, would guess that it is the prevailing Soviet criticism of that trend of thought. Thus Lifshitz continues, in ironic vein:

"What is literature? A reflection of reality, a picture of the objective world surrounding the artist, his class, his social stratum? Not at all. 'Literature is an imaginative form of class consciousness.' It is 'a special form of class consciousness expressing itself by means of verbal images.' Such is the explanation given to the readers of *The Literary Encyclopedia.*[3] Thus the contents of literature are not taken from the external world, but from the depths of a definite class psychology. Some historians of literature went even further along this path and made the

[2] In English translation in *Literature and Marxism A Controversy by Soviet Critics*, ed. Angel Flores, p 9 Critics Group Series, No. 9, New York.

[3] A Soviet reference work on the history of literature and literary criticism. At one time it was regarded as a standard authority.

deduction that, in general, the artist can portray nothing but his own class. Hence, when Gogol, for example, wrote about the Dnieper Cossacks, the discerning eye knows that they are not Dnieper Cossacks at all, but petty noblemen like Gogol himself, disguised in Ukrainian dress and warm overcoats.

"Each literary work is thus converted into a coded telegram and the entire history of art into a collection of rebuses and symbolic figures hiding certain class meanings. We have to decipher these hieroglyphics in order to determine their 'social equivalent.' Hence that mania of vulgar sociologists to catch the writer red-handed just at the moment when he accidentally babbles out the primary tendencies of his class consciousness. If Shakespeare's Juliet, for example, exclaims: *O break, my heart, poor bankrupt, break at once!*, the shrewd sociologist will unfailingly seize on this plaintive plea to link the great dramatist with the interests of the London merchants, the commercialized noblemen, or the 'bourgeoisified landowners.'

"Leninist criticism has nothing in common with such pettifogging. People are sane. Their consciousness is not just a psychological symptom of some subjective point of view. It gives a picture of the objective world, it reflects external reality. Writers and artists show this reality in a more or less correct and artistic form. The principal shortcoming of this widespread sociological theory lies in the fact that it replaces Lenin's *theory of reflection* with class symbolism, and in this most important point it breaks with Marxism." [4]

ART AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

However, it could not be too strongly emphasized that Lifshitz by no means denies relationship between art and the class struggle, or the necessity and importance of a class analysis of literature. What he rejects is the vulgar sociologist's conception

[4] *Op. cit*, pp. 9–10.

of these things. Thus he immediately proceeds to raise the question:

"But how can one combine the theory of reflection with a class point of view? wonders the vulgar sociologist. If literature reflects external reality, what falls to the lot of class analysis?"

Lifshitz does well to raise these questions, for they are evidently the very point at which his opponents considered him vulnerable. Professor I. Nusinov, for example, wrote:

"Marxist criticism has always held that writers express the moods and ideas of definite classes. It explains the contradictions in their works and viewpoints as due to the contradictions in their class backgrounds. . . .

"Lifshitz thinks otherwise. It is not a question of the class origin of the writer, nor the contradictions of class realities . . ." [1]

This same writer (Nusinov) had stated, in 1931, in an article entitled, "What Is the Objective Criterion of a Work of Art?". "Creative art serves *class preservation, class consolidation.* It is artistic or inartistic, in proportion to its ability to fulfill this function *without depending upon the underlying idea.*" [2] In another place he had gone so far as to say, "Cervantes, Shakespeare, Molière, Pushkin, Gogol, Tolstoy, Dostoievsky, created images of the social essence of their class. . . . The end of class society will also be the end of their imagery. When man will have lost power over man, when class and property are destroyed, these images will lose all their universal significance." [3]

Lifshitz holds that the answer to Nusinov lies in the position which he states in part as follows:

"The class struggle in literature is the struggle of the people's tendencies against the ideology of domination and slavery, against religious sterility, against cruelty, against polite insolence

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 31.
[2] Quoted in *op. cit.*, p. 43.
[3] Quoted in *op. cit.*, p. 44.

and suavity. To apply this class point of view to the entire history of world art is not by any means equivalent to pigeonholing works of art into various compartments or social groups. No, it means really to understand the artistic heritage and to evaluate everything that is great in it; to understand its deviations, its collapses, and its contradictions, and to judge these in the light of a subsequent, much clearer demarcation of classes, in the light of the contemporary struggle of the proletariat." [4]

Thus, to see literature, or any other art, as a reflection of external reality rather than as a reflection of the class consciousness of the author is necessarily to make a class analysis precisely because the class struggle is so large a part of reality. However, it is a class analysis of the work rather than a "classifying" of the author. Moreover, and this is perhaps the main point, a faithful reflection of reality, and of the class struggle in it, can never be achieved by means of an inert, photographic copy. Moving, dynamic, reflection must be created.

We perceive here an instance of the way in which Soviet philosophy of art is connected with Soviet ontology, the theory of reality or the universe which we shall examine in detail in the next chapter. According to this theory, everything in the universe moves, changes, transforms itself, has a history. The social material with which the artist deals (and there is a sense in which even the non-human material dealt with is part of the social scheme) is, of course, no exception to this rule. Insofar as this material is the social life of man, the artist, if he wishes to be faithful to what it actually is, must somehow get this movement into his picture; he must render it, artistically, of course, (not as a scientist would), in terms of his peculiar medium. To accomplish this end in regard to the human scene is to reflect those forces of conflict and struggle which eventuate (have eventuated for a large section of humanity) in the abolition of classes and the transformation of the life conditions, and, hence, the

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

moral and spiritual possibilities of life, of the mass of mankind. We should be able to sense the future as well as see the past in a work of art.

Lifshitz concretizes his position as follows:

"It is our deep belief that no matter how far back we are taken by the science of history, the distinction between the Marxist and the ordinary sociologist remains the same, and the criterion for determining this distinction also remains the same. The dictatorship of the proletariat was prepared by long and stubborn struggle of the masses, by struggle which has its origin in social inequality, and which constitutes the main content of all class struggle. In contra-distinction to the (non-Marxist) sociologist, the Marxist must trace the movement towards the proletarian revolution and socialist ideology through the entire history of world culture; he must bring out at each epoch that progressive maximum of social thought which reflects the living conditions of the oppressed classes; he must find those features which, at the *given* period, distinguish the progressive, democratic elements of culture from the elements of reaction and defense of exploitation of man by man. Any interpretation of classes which distracts us from this fundamental content of history leads us away from Marxism." [5]

Such a statement does not mean that a good artist must be a "socialist before his time." It does mean, however, that we must be able to see in his work reflections of the forces moving, even though unconsciously, towards the broad social outcomes of history. The Soviet thinker feels he has the right to draw conclusions from the fact that the movement of human society has now in fact given rise to a socialist civilization in one-sixth of the world. He firmly believes that this socialist civilization will become fully communist (is now, in fact, beginning to make the transition), and that communism is bound to become in time a world wide condition of society. His belief in these latter even-

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 75.

tualities is, of course, all the stronger since history has now confirmed the first of them. His feeling is that if the actual course of human evolution has been in this direction, then he has a right to have it reflected in art which is claimed to be true to the life of man.

THE ARTIST AND SOCIAL REALITY

At this point a whole concatenation of questions, the familiar brood of the modern philosophic tradition under capitalism, bursts forth. Why should the artist be "faithful" to the social reality? In the name of what is he under any obligation to "recognize" its movement, or the direction of that movement, even if it has a direction? Why should he regard the raising of mankind to a level where *homo homini lupus* is no longer a proverb as of any "importance"? Why can he not be a great artist by "denying" reality, for example, by depicting the very opposite of reality? In the name of what can we deny him the right to dislike reality, or the goal towards which humanity is evidently moving, and to get as far away from them as possible?

Two questions are here basically involved:

(1) Why should the artist have anything to do with a world view or morality of any kind?

(2) Why should the artist have anything to do with the particular world view and morality of socialism?

The first question is fairly easily disposed of so long as we remember that the bourgeois gentilhomme speaks prose whether he knows it or not. In other words, if the question has to do, not with the psychological consciousness of the author, but with the objective content of his work, then there is a sense in which a work of art has or reflects or fits in with or implies or accepts a world outlook and a set of values whether the author is conscious of it or not. It is akin to the sense in which a living human being does not have to be a philosopher in order to have a

philosophy. To be a human being is enough. Life does the rest, by forcing us to make choices, to solve problems, to develop preferences, to believe this or that, or neither this nor that. In some, the philosophy acted on is conscious, well developed, deepened, integrated, while in others it is unconscious, vacillating, superficial and inconsistent.

In this respect a work of art is, perhaps, not unlike a human being. The artist may (consciously) have nothing to do with ontology or morality, but it would be difficult indeed for his work to have nothing to do with them. Even those artists who dislike "reality" and whose work is concerned with getting away from it are head over heels in ontology and morality. While they naively suppose that to dislike life, to deny its value, and to have no faith that things will ever be better than they are means to have no philosophy, it means, of course, to have a very definite philosophy, developed and rounded out, particularly in its esthetic implications, by a philosopher like Schopenhauer. Pessimism is, of course, quite as much of a philosophy as optimism. It should also be noted that one who has not yet "made up his mind" (and whether he ever intends to or not makes no difference) is also a philosopher *de facto*. While he is waiting to make up his mind, he does not cease to act, to prefer, to value, to make decisions, choices. It simply comes to this, that all the while he is psychologically suspending judgment, he is in fact a wavering eclectic, like a man driving his car this way and that while "making up his mind" which way to go. Should our eclectic suggest the alternative of stopping the car while he makes up his mind, we should naturally be forced to reply in unpleasantly macabre terms, as there is, of course, only one way in which he can stop the journey of his life.

The second question is more concrete and comes closer to the heart of the matter: why should the artist have anything to do with the particular world view and ethics of socialism? In fact, the objections comprised in the first question seem, on

some occasions, to be little more than a cloak for the second. The historical materialist suspects that it is sometimes easier to maintain the attitude that art need have nothing to do with any set of social values than with a certain particular set. At any rate, the question now before us brings us back, of course, to the fundamental philosophical issues. It is a question of evidence and proof in respect to the basic position in ontology and morals.

The historical materialist does not claim to possess the full and absolute truth in any field of philosophy (although he believes in the existence of absolute truth); he does not feel that the evidence is all in or the question finally settled. Neither does he believe in a "closed system" of ontology or morality. However, it is quite clear to him that there is some truth and some evidence, and that we must act in the light of it by way of taking a certain basic attitude, working out a system to a certain extent. He considers that the "bourgeois" philosopher of art is unrealistic in not recognizing that he plays into a certain world view and morality willy nilly, and that he is unfaithful to his obligations as a philosopher in refusing to integrate, systematize and make explicit in theory the commitments to which he is actually driven.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE GREAT ART OF THE PAST

It is easy to convey the impression, in such a discussion as the preceding, that the Soviet philosopher of art insists upon a doctrinaire and sharply defined social attitude on the part of the artist. However, one thing that should help in stamping such an impression as inaccurate is a knowledge of the circumstances under which the contemporary theory arose, the kind of view to which it opposed itself, and the direction in which it itself moved in moving against these views. Evidently, this direction was one of a less doctrinaire approach, a less restricted outlook,

a less carping attitude [1] towards artists and artistic productions of the past. Less sociology, and more art is the demand that runs through this side of the discussion. Evidently, there was a very strong urge to take full account of the perennial human appeal of great works of art, of elements in them which transcend their own age. This view was by no means departing from the basic tradition of Marxism, inasmuch as it was to this very problem that Marx directed attention when he wrote, in his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*:

". . . the difficulty is not in grasping the idea that Greek art and epos are bound up with certain forms of social development. It rather lies in understanding why they still constitute with us a source of esthetic enjoyment and in certain respects prevail as the standard and model beyond attainment." [2]

As we shall see, the whole controversy around the issue of vulgar sociologism possesses much the same significance in the field of philosophy of art as the earlier controversy around mechanism possessed for the general field of philosophy. In fact, the position of vulgar sociology, with its doctrinaire conception of art and the artist, and its narrow interpretation of the class struggle, would seem to be a close philosophic relative of the inflexible, severely restricted conception of materialism held by the early mechanists. An important question that remains is whether the present group, in criticizing vulgar sociologism and attempting to transcend its narrow limits, will be able to avoid the other extreme, the vagueness and lack of direction to which, it is felt, a thinker like Deborin fell a victim in his first controversy with the mechanists, and for which he was criticized by Mitin.

However this matter may turn out, there is little doubt that

[1] F. Levin, a Soviet theorist, characterizes a certain textbook, written under the influence of vulgar sociology, as one that "represents a 'scolding' of the classical writers" *Op. cit.*, p. 67.

[2] Pp. 311–12. Kerr, Chicago, 1904.

Lenin as well as Marx had no sympathy with a carping or disdainful attitude towards the great artistic productions of past ages. In his conversation with Clara Zetkin, Lenin said:

"We must retain the beautiful, take it as an example, hold on to it even though it is 'old'. Why turn away from real beauty and discard it for good and all as a starting point for further development just because it is 'old'? Why worship the new as the god to be obeyed just because it is the 'new'? That is nonsense, sheer nonsense. There is a great deal of conventional art hypocrisy in it, too, and respect for the art fashions of the west. Of course, unconscious!" [3]

Again, when he speaks of "proletarian culture" Lenin significantly says:

"This is what we must bear in mind when we speak of proletarian culture, for example. Unless we clearly understand that only by an exact knowledge of the culture created by the whole development of mankind, that only by reworking this culture, is it possible to build proletarian culture, unless this is understood we shall not be able to solve our problem. Proletarian culture is not something that has sprung from nowhere, it is not an invention of those who call themselves experts in proletarian culture. That is all nonsense. Proletarian culture must be the result of the natural development of the stores of knowledge which mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist society, landlord society and bureaucratic society. All these roads and paths have led, are leading, and continue to lead to proletarian culture in the same way as the political economy reworked by Marx showed us what human society must arrive at, showed us the transition to the class struggle, to the beginning of the proletarian revolution." [4]

---

[3] Zetkin, Clara, *Reminiscences of Lenin*, p. 12 International, New York, 1934.

[4] "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues Speech Delivered at the Third All-Russian Congress of the Russian Young Communist League, October 2, 1920." In *Selected Works*, Vol. IX, pp 470, 471. Cooperative Publishing Society, Moscow. Also published by International, New York.

LENIN'S VIEW OF TOLSTOY

Lenin's essays on Tolstoy [1] are usually taken as a kind of model of the type of approach which ought to be used, and as representing an implied condemnation of such a tendency as vulgar sociology. Many who followed this tendency in dealing with Tolstoy, for example, had taken as the starting point of their approach his class position and class consciousness. Hence, they were prone to reason that Tolstoy's depiction of the peasantry and peasant problems could not possess any great artistic value because he was a nobleman, and hence could never really understand the peasant.

Lenin had a different view. "In the works of Tolstoy," he wrote,[2] "are expressed the strength and the weakness, the power and the narrowness of the mass movement. His vehement, fervent, and at times ruthlessly bitter protest against the State and the official Church translated the sentiments of a primitive peasant democracy in which centuries of serfdom, administrative bureaucracy and plunder, ecclesiastical jesuitism, lies and fraud had amassed mountains of wrath and hatred. His uncompromising repudiation of private land-ownership translated the psychology of the peasant masses at that historic moment when the old medieval form of land-ownership and later the 'parceling out' of small plots of land by the land-owning gentry and by the government had finally become an intolerable barrier to the further development of the country, and when this old system of land-ownership was inevitably doomed to the most inexorable and ruthless destruction. His unceasing denunciation of capitalism, filled with the deepest emotion and the most passionate indignation expresses all the horror of the patriarchal peasant before the advance of a new, incomprehensible, invisible foe,

[1] Gathered together and translated into English in *Dialectics*, No. 6, Critics Group Press, New York. Ed Angel Flores. Several also appear in Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. XI.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 18.

coming no doubt from the city or from abroad, destroying all the 'foundations' of rural life, and bringing in its wake unprecedented ruin, poverty, famine, savagery, prostitution, syphilis—all the scourges of the 'epoch of primary accumulation' intensified a hundredfold by the transmigration to Russian soil of the most up-to-date methods of robbery figured out by Mr. Coupon."

Lenin fully recognized that Tolstoy the social philosopher repudiated the Marxian doctrine. Yet Tolstoy the literary master depicted with the fidelity of genius the social forces and struggles that were leading to a revolutionary crisis and subsequent reconstruction of society predicted by the Marxists. It was in this sense that his art reflected the social reality while his consciously held philosophy, in Lenin's opinion, misinterpreted it. From this point of view, Lenin feels, we understand better the "contradictions" surrounding Tolstoy:

"The contradictions in the works, the views, and the doctrines of the Tolstoyan school are truly glaring. On the one hand, an artist of genius who not only paints incomparable pictures of Russian life, but who contributes works of the first order to world literature. On the other hand, a landowner wearing the martyr's crown in the name of Christ. On the one hand, an extraordinarily powerful, direct and sincere protest against social lies and hypocrisies; on the other a 'Tolstoyan,' that is, a wornout hysterical sniveller called the Russian intellectual who, publicly beating his breast, cries: 'I am bad, I am vile, but I am striving after moral self-perfection: I no longer eat meat, and I now live on rice cutlets.' On the one hand, relentless criticism of capitalist exploitation, exposure of governmental violence, and of the farce of justice and administration; revelation of all the depth of contradictions between the growth of wealth, the achievements of civilization, and the growth of poverty, the brutalization and suffering of the working masses. On the other hand, weak minded preaching of 'non-resistance to evil' by

force. . . . But these contradictions in the views and teachings of Tolstoy are not accidental. They are expressions of the contradictions in Russian life during the last third of the nineteenth century. The patriarchal village which only yesterday had been freed from serfdom was handed over to capital and the state to be literally plundered and sacked. The old basis of personal economy and peasant life which had stood for centuries, broke down with incredible rapidity. As a prophet who would discover new recipes for the salvation of humanity, Tolstoy is ludicrous; and those Tolstoyans—Russian and foreign—who have sought to transform the very weakest side of his teaching into a dogma are, therefore, truly pitiful." [3]

CRITERIA IN JUDGING ART

What is good art? The answer to this question is naturally connected with the answer to the question, what is art? That is, the Soviet philosopher would reply, (if he had to reply in a sentence), that art is good to the extent that it reflects (presents, represents, renders) faithfully and with positive esthetic effect, the reality with which it deals. In this answer there is an element of relativity, and there is also something absolute. The criterion is relative in the sense that the external reality, chiefly the social life of man, is something that is changing, evolving, subject to thoroughgoing transformations. However, it is easy to overplay this relative aspect, to magnify it to such an extent that it crowds out everything else. The Soviet thinker is particularly anxious to avoid this pitfall into which he feels a good many philosophers living under capitalism have been led. To him, the existence of this relativistic element is by no means a warrant for the belief that we cannot come to objective conclusions about the merits of works of art, that we must ultimately fall back into a *chacun à son goût* attitude. This attitude seems to him to

[3] *Op. cit.*, p 14.

be an evasion of or escape from the basic issue, with which the "absolute" that he recognizes helps him to deal. This absolute is, of course, the reflection of reality, the degree of fidelity with which it is reflected. Judgments in this field, he considers, are not ultimately a matter of arbitrary taste or choice, but are amenable to a considerable degree of objective determination.

To believe in an absolute standard is, of course, not necessarily to believe one can fully attain to it. To be guided by it is not the same thing as fulfilling it. On the other hand, because the standard is not attained does not make it any the less absolute. Each attempt to attain it may fall more or less short, and have a certain relative status—that of an approximation—but an absolute status too, in the terms of what it approximates. We perceive here a situation very similar to that of scientific truth. Contrary to the impression of many who seem to feel that they can "deduce" the position of the Marxist from the fact that he uses a dialectical method, the existence of absolute truth is maintained by him. As Lenin emphasizes in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* his position is, that while our knowledge at any given moment is incomplete and historically limited, there is an objective and absolute (though not static—on the contrary, essentially dynamic) reality to which the knowledge is an approximation. This reality is what Lenin calls the truth. Thus his thesis might be formulated: truth is absolute, knowledge, relative. There is the same kind of dialectical interpenetration of absolute and relative in art, which reflects reality in its own way.

This way, is, of course, not the same way as science. Art is art, and science is science. No one is likely to confuse them even when they reflect what is ultimately the same reality. It is possible for us to smell what we eat without identifying the sense of smell with the sense of taste. There is something unique about each. At the same time we are not surprised if we are told that these two senses, functionally related as they are to the same outward substance, have something in common. In the same

way, art is unique, and science is unique, yet they have something in common. Art approaches, conceives and renders its subject matter in its own peculiar fashion. It speaks its own language, has its own values, makes its own appeal. It would be an egregious impropriety to attempt to reduce art to science. But it would also be fatally one-sided not to explore the significance of the fact that art and science live and grow in the same world, intertwine and coalesce in the same human consciousness (in which they somehow work themselves out into common terms without being "reduced" one to the other), that they address themselves to the same external reality. There is an ultimate sense in which art and science are *commensurable* underneath all their surface differences. Otherwise, they probably would not be so closely associated in what we call the spiritual life of man, and they certainly would not find the unity they now and again do find in human personality.[1]

While the course of our discussion so far has emphasized elements ultimately common to art and science, because that is what stands out in the Soviet field, especially in contrast to schools of philosophy in the capitalist world, it must not be thought that factors and problems wherein art differs from science are neglected.

In the article on "Esthetics" in the *Bolshaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopedia*[2] we find the following:

"Basically, the peculiarity of art as distinguished from science consists in this, that it reflects the concrete content of social life, of philosophical, political and other ideas, figuratively, in imagery. . . .

"However, the difference between the knowledge of reality

---

[1] For example, Walt Whitman makes this observation in *Democratic Vistas*. "America demands a poetry that is bold, modern, and all-surrounding and cosmical, as she is herself. It must in no respect ignore science or the modern, but inspire itself with science and the modern." P. 315 Doubleday.

[2] The most comprehensive of Soviet encyclopedias—a work projected in sixty-five volumes, more than fifty of which have been completed to date.

in science and the knowledge of it in art does not amount to a simple difference of the form of knowledge: it is at the same time connected with a different method of approach to the rendering of reality and the influencing of it. More concretely, the specific quality of the artistic rendering of the world consists in the fact that art, expressing itself figuratively and imaginatively, creates and perfects rhythm . . . symmetry, proportion, picturesque effects. . . .[3]

In the same work, the problem of beauty is taken up in the following fashion:

"Marxism rejects the idealistic point of view which considers beauty exclusively a subjective category, not rooted in the objective characteristics of reality. Marxism rejects also the opposite view, attributing beauty directly to nature, to the things themselves, taken independently of all historical factors in the activity of humanity, and independently of our perceptions and feelings. Nature and its phenomena cannot be in and by themselves either beautiful or not beautiful. The feeling of beauty develops in the human being under the influence of historical conditions, in the process of the evolution of his productive activity, and of the art and culture rooted therein. As distinguished, however, from the subjective idealists, Marxists recognize that the feeling of the beauty of nature is not a purely subjective condition of consciousness, but . . . rests upon definite, objective properties and phenomena in nature itself and in the social life of man.

"The qualities of ugliness or beauty do not arise in us by themselves, merely through the act of simple observation or perception, but are developed during the evolution of culture, and in the course of production, as the result of long training. The perception of beauty varies in accordance with the degree of mastery of mankind over nature. While men were unable to cope with the obstacles presented by mountain ranges, the mountain

[3] Vol. 64, p. 678. Translation, J. S.

landscape gave rise to terror and abhorrence. The history of the landscape in painting and literature supports this statement. Only in the historical development of social, in the last analysis, productive, activity, does man develop in himself the ability to create the graceful, the harmonious, the beautiful, the well proportioned, as distinguished from the misshapen or less perfect, and, under the influence of this activity, learns to distinguish similar phenomena and properties in nature. In this field also, Marx's thesis applies, that man, changing nature, changes his own nature as well. In this growth of the feeling for beauty, a very important part is played by the evolution of art, from applied and folk arts to so-called "pure" art. Art itself arose out of the laboring activity of people. . . .[4]

ART AND LABOR

It would repay us to examine Gorky's application of this last thought to the field of literary art on one occasion:[1]

"The role of the labor processes, which have converted a two-legged animal into man and created the basic elements of culture has never been investigated as deeply and thoroughly as it deserves. . . .

"The historians of primitive culture have completely waived the clear evidence of materialist thought, to which the processes of labor and the sum total of phenomena in the social life of ancient man inevitably gave rise. These evidences have come down to us in the shape of fables and myths in which we hear the echo of work done in the taming of animals, in the discovery of healing herbs, in the invention of implements of labor. Even in remote antiquity man dreamed of being able to fly in

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. 64, p. 675. Translation, J. S.

[1] His report on "Soviet Literature" at the Congress of Soviet writers (1934), and printed in English translation in *Problems of Soviet Literature*. Cooperative Publishing Society, Moscow, 1935.

the air, as can be seen from the legend about Phaeton, about Daedalus and his son Icarus, and also from the fable of the 'magic carpet.' Men dreamed of speedier movement over the earth—hence the fable of the 'seven league boots.' . . . All the myths and legends of ancient times find their consummation, as it were, in the Tantalus myth. Tantalus stands up to his neck in water, he is racked by thirst, but unable to allay it—there you have ancient man amid the phenomena of the outer world, which he has not yet learned to know.

"I do not doubt that you are familiar with ancient legends, tales and myths, but I should like their fundamental meaning to be more deeply comprehended. And their meaning is the aspiration of ancient working people to lighten their toil, increase its productiveness, to aim against four footed and two footed foes, and also by the power of words, by the device of 'exorcism' and 'incantation,' to gain an influence over the elemental phenomena of nature which are hostile to men. The last named is particularly important, as it betokens how deeply men believed in the power of the word, and this belief is accounted for by the obvious and very real service of speech in organizing the social relations and labor processes of men."

FORM AND CONTENT

As we should expect, this philosophy of art stands for the study of form in its closest possible connection with content. It holds that form cannot be fully understood or appreciated when divorced from content, while, of course, content cannot be rendered artistically except in and through artistic forms. It goes almost without saying that these two organically connected elements affect and influence each other. For example, the history and evolution of art forms—the study of which is especially emphasized—cannot be understood except in relation

to the history and evolution of society generally. Art forms do not develop haphazardly, but in relation to that with which they are dealing and which they are reflecting.

A problem has sometimes been raised as to whether the "political value" of a given work of art cannot be higher than its "esthetic value" or vice versa. In this view, the esthetic value of art tends to be identified with form; its political aspect, with content. However, this whole way of thinking assumes the general orientation of vulgar sociologism rather than the contemporary Soviet viewpoint. In terms of the latter, the political value of art is not necessarily limited to, or even identified with the consciously held political doctrine of the author or the deliberately injected bias found in the work. The chief source of political value is the extent to which reality is actually reflected as it lives and moves in the subject matter. While the fidelity of this reflection is by no means lessened, and, other things being equal, will be greatly heightened by a certain consciously held political viewpoint, it is also true that one artist with an inadequate political viewpoint can be incomparably greater than another with an adequate political viewpoint. This was noted by Marx, in the case of Balzac, who avowedly wrote as a royalist and a Catholic; and also by Lenin, in respect to Tolstoy, as we have occasion to observe.

In the works of such writers the historical materialist does not see something of great artistic but little political value. On the contrary, because their artistic value is great, their political value is great, for their political value consists primarily in the fidelity with which they reflect the complex reality in and through which politics moves. In some cases, like those mentioned, the artist is so faithful to his calling that, in depicting the world as it is, he also depicts, without realizing it, the very forces which sweep away the hopes and anticipations of his own consciously held social philosophy.

SOCIALIST ART IN THE U.S.S.R.

Soviet philosophy of art must apply itself not only to the consideration of art in capitalist or other class societies, but to the whole problem of the role, aim and criticism of art in its own socialist society. This problem involves the most direct application of the theory of socialist realism,[1] since the existence of a socialist society means, of course, that there is socialist reality to be reflected. Here the socialist reality appears not only as something implicit in the movement of things, but as something that has already emerged (and is itself moving—towards communism).

Socialist realism was not always regarded, however, as it is today, as the guiding doctrine of what art should be in a socialist society. It is only fairly recently, as a result of the controversies we have discussed, which involved the entire field of art criticism, that this doctrine became generally accepted, both by the critics and the artists themselves. What sort of art should exist and flourish under socialism had been a moot question, and the early years of the revolution were characterized, in art as in cultural matters generally, by a bewildering variety of schools and tendencies claiming on every side to be the true possessors of the socialist heritage. The productions of many of these groups are today regarded as museum rarities, and are looked back upon with an historical interest not unmixed with amusement.

It will help us to understand socialist realism as a theory of art criticism if we examine its attitude towards such issues as nationalism and internationalism, optimism and pessimism, romanticism, naturalism and formalism. What do we find if we approach the matter from this side?

[1] This term is used in a general sense to designate the whole Soviet philosophy of art, and also in a more specific sense to designate the theory of art criticism within that philosophy.

NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM IN SOVIET ART

At the same time that Soviet philosophy is international in its outlook, the Soviet government takes steps to encourage the development of national, and many non-Russian, cultures among the numerous racial groups of the U.S.S.R., creating written languages where none existed before, setting up schools in the native tongues, and subsidizing the development of native arts in many ways. At the same time that the artist is encouraged to have an international outlook, he is earnestly advised to study deeply and sympathetically the folk art produced by sharply different national groups. To many critics these policies appear to be inconsistent; to some who have only lately discovered them, they appear to be an effect of the war. Actually, they are as old as Soviet society. The "contradictory" tendencies in these policies interpenetrate and find a unity in the conception of culture "national in form and socialist in content." The internationalism of socialism is not seen as cultural uniformity, or as the predominance of one language and art system throughout the world.[1] There is no discriminatory racial or national policy in the field of art any more than there is in the field of politics or economics. What is held in common in virtue of "internationalism" is certain social aims, a certain conception of the welfare of humanity as a whole. Just as socialism is not regarded as incompatible with the development of human individuality, personality, but is, on the contrary, regarded as the only means through which human beings can attain the richest individual development of which they are capable, so the internationalism

[1] That is, during the period of *socialism*. The theory usually has been that when world wide *communism* comes about, a single language and culture may evolve. *Cf.* Stalin's discussion of this point in his 1925 lecture at the University of the Peoples of the East *Leninism*, Vol. I, 1934 ed. His thesis is that the process of encouraging and developing national cultures during the period of the building of socialism will make richer and deeper any universal culture that may later emerge, since this culture will represent a fusion of previously elaborated elements rather than an imposition of some one system and the suppression of others.

of socialist art is regarded as one that gives the fullest scope to national forms. National art can realize its national potentialities and uniqueness far more fully in sympathetic collaboration with other national arts than by isolating itself from the broader social community, or regarding its only possible relationship to it as that of contemptuous conqueror.

The view taken is that the socialist is an internationalist not because he loves his nation, land and language less, but precisely because he loves them more. Under socialism in the Soviet Union, the Georgians, Tadjiks or Uzbeks have not become less Georgian, Tadjikian or Uzbekian (as they were becoming under the Tsar), but more Georgian, Tadjikian and Uzbekian in the sense that they now learn their respective languages and histories freely, that schools and books in those languages have increased enormously, that native art productions of all kinds are encouraged in various ways. In regard to the vast majority of the people of such ethnic groups, it might be said that the Soviet social, economic and educational policies have for the first time made it possible for them to become really acquainted with their "own" cultures.

The sort of nationalism that is rejected by Soviet internationalism is that which regards other nations or races as inherently inferior. "Socialist in content" means, among other things, an acceptance of that set of values which expresses the human aims of socialism and communism. It involves the further realization that socialism, in order to emerge, grow and develop, needs help from art, just as art, in order to enrich itself by the talents of the hitherto dispossessed, needs help from socialism.

It is not difficult to see the folk element in national art as compatible with the internationalism of socialist realism. The view held, as we have seen in Gorky's case, is that a basic motif in all folk art, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly expressed, is the desire of the common people for a better life. The further view is, of course, that it is not the common people of

any other nationality that is standing in the way of such a consummation, but rather a certain set of economic, political and social limitations which can be completely removed only in cooperation with the common people of all other lands. The basic economic conditions in which the center of the problem is located cut across boundaries of nationality and race. The content of folk art, like homely proverbs, is very often the same underneath the differences of national form. To say the oppressed masses have a kind of spontaneous internationalism might be to point merely to the fact that misery loves company. But, of course, in the Soviet conception, it goes deeper—to the fact that all common people have a common enemy and share a common goal.

OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM

Writing on Gorky's conception of socialist realism in literature, one Soviet writer says:

"Literature ceases to be pessimistic, to be capable only of negation. The criticism to which the old literature subjected bourgeois-landlord society could have an objectively revolutionary meaning because of what it rejected. The revolutionary meaning of socialist realism is affirmation of socialist society. The optimism of socialist realism has its logic in the fact that it 'confirms existence as activity, as creation, as the fulfillment of man's potentialities, the consummation of his victory over the forces of nature.' " [1]

The victory is conditioned on another, by virtue of which, "Soviet literature has at its disposal 'completely new material. . . . This is the material of a victory unprecedented in human history, the victory of the proletariat. . . . The historical import of that victory precludes the use in Soviet literature, as

[1] Lavretsky, A., *Gorky on Socialist Realism.* International Literature, No. 4, 1937.

subjects, of the hopelessness and meaninglessness of individual life. . . ." [2]

This optimism which pervades socialist realism is not of the Pollyanna kind, as anyone familiar with the writings of Gorky himself will recognize. Neither is it an optimism which is inconsistent with the most minute and detailed portrayal of sufferings, hardships, failures, shortcomings, trials and tribulations (in a perspective that includes the future as well as the past). Besides Gorky's works, novels like Sholokhov's *Seeds of To-Morrow* (or *Soil Upturned* as it is also translated), Gladkov's *Cement*, Alexei Tolstoy's *Darkness and Dawn*, as well as the other better known works of these men, the poems of a Mayakovsky, plays such as "The Russian People," "Aristocrats," "The Front," films like "Chapaev," "The Road to Life," "Potemkin," "Youth of the Poet" are but a few of the examples that might be mentioned. The same situation may be seen in the field of music, in painting and in sculpture.

Although Soviet optimism has the sense of an emancipating mission, it is eminently an optimism of this world. Its enjoyments and its rewards are here. That does not mean, however, that they are necessarily or exclusively of the flesh. Its gayety is not the disillusioned indulgence of an Omar Khayyam crying for more wine, more women, and more song. Neither is it the refined calculation of the sensualist who never overindulges on any one occasion in order that he may indulge most after all. "Neither monk nor Don Juan, nor the intermediate attitude of the German philistines," as Lenin put it. Its optimism comes of faith in humanity, and its joy of this life is not shamefaced or cynical.

The materialist philosophy at the basis of socialist realism is neither sensual nor primitivistic. As we have seen, it stresses intellect, plan, art and science. What it rejects is not "spiritual values," or intellectual and artistic enjoyments, but "other-

[2] *Ibid.*

worldliness." It notes that a good many "other-worldly" philosophies and religions are somewhat pessimistic and have rather a poor opinion of man's earthly possibilities.

REVOLUTIONARY ROMANTICISM

Many writers outside the Soviet Union seem to feel that socialist art must reject romanticism in any form, probably because they think of socialist art in terms of "photographic" realism or naturalism. Actually, this latter is sharply repudiated, while a certain kind of romanticism is accepted. It is sometimes called "revolutionary" or "active" romanticism in order to distinguish it from "utopian" romanticism. Revolutionary romanticism appreciates and expresses the warmth, excitement, and emotional richness of dedication to the revolution and its aims. It feels that it avoids being utopian by virtue of the fact that it realizes the nature of the forces at work in society, and the necessary conditions of struggle under which the mass of mankind can win through to a better life. It does not simply yearn and hope for a better life, or naively trust that groups whose interests stand in the way will voluntarily and benevolently abdicate. It is strongly emotional, but not at all sentimental.

The word utopian in this connection naturally recalls the characterization given by Marx and Engels to the early "socialists" like Owen, Fourier and St. Simon, who saw that society was in need of reconstruction, but who could not offer any realistic method by which such reconstruction could be effected. It is in much the same sense that utopianism is thought of here. In the literature of the nineteenth century, for example, there are many writers who are realistic enough in their criticism of society, but romantic in the bad sense in their conception of a method of remedy. Under these circumstances, their realism comes in conflict with their romanticism.

NATURALISM AND FORMALISM

Romanticism needs realism in order to deal with socialism, but it needs the proper kind of realism. Photographic realism or literal-minded naturalism is as bad, in its own way, as utopian romanticism. Its defect is its inability to see and render the way in which things are moving. It sees only what they are, not what they are becoming. It deals only with the momentary what, neglecting the whence and the whither. Not that socialist realism would forget the what: " 'We are interested in the accurate representation of what is,' Gorky writes, 'only because we require this for a more profound and clear understanding of everything we are pledged to eradicate, and of everything which we must create.'

"Socialist realism, like the class that creates it, lives in the present and the future; it faces the future and reflects the present in the light of the future. . . . Carefully distinguishing between realism and 'coarse, mechanical descriptions of nature,' he wrote that 'in seeking to reproduce any given fact, realism has no right . . . to refuse to investigate its future fate' for both the past and the future, 'although concealed to the naked eye, are nevertheless fully as real as the present.' " [1]

Photographic realism or naturalism in the realm of art is analogous to what formal logic is in the realm of science, or mechanistic materialism is in the field of philosophy. It fails to see in things what they are being transformed into. It transfixes reality, and in so doing, devitalizes and kills it. This sort of realism is inevitably drab and prosaic when it is not morbid and pathological. It has no faith in the future and therefore ignores it. It accumulates minute details, but discerns no pattern, sees no forest, only trees; no whole, only fragmentary parts. It is blindly empirical, fruitlessly static.

Formalism in art also does violence to the content of reality.

[1] *Ibid.*

While naturalism or mechanical realism over-emphasizes one aspect of content, formalism tries to ignore and play down content in general. In the end, it tries to disassociate art from social consequences, and the artist from social responsibilities. If photographic realism suggests analogies to mechanistic materialism, formalism calls to mind metaphysical idealism. It is significant to note that they have in common a static approach.

Another trait common to naturalism and formalism is that they generally try to avoid the realm of moral values. They have a tendency to conceive of themselves as divorced from obligations, as neutral, impartial, or altogether above the battle. It is clear from our previous discussion that socialist realism maintains that it is impossible for art to avoid this realm. The artist may ignore or forget ethical values, but that is, of course, a different matter. His work plays a social role, has an effect whether it be planned or unplanned, conscious or unconscious. Socialist realism, of course, orients itself deliberately on socialist values.

Part II

WORLD VIEW

CHAPTER V

OUR UNIVERSE: GENERAL THEORY OF DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

MARXISM IS NOT ONLY A SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

It is sometimes thought that the only deep or genuine interest dialectical materialism has is in the field of social philosophy. However, such is not the case. Dialectical materialism is a socially oriented philosophy, but is not only a "social philosophy" as that term is sometimes understood among us—that is, as a discussion limited to the realm of social problems, one which is not a part of a larger world view. The social views of the Soviet philosopher are consciously and deliberately connected, in a unified way, with his wider theory of the universe, or ontology, his theory of rational thinking, or logic, his theory of ethical conduct, and his theory of art.

In fact, he maintains the view that any doctrines within these fields, however anxious their authors may be to confine and insulate them within the boundaries of a "speciality," have social bearings. That is to say, they influence, in one way or another, theories and practices in respect to things social. It is his belief that these bearings and influences are not always consciously intended, or unified and consistent, but that they always exist. Human culture is a community affair, made up of inter-acting, not vacuum-sealed, parts.

Moreover, the Soviet thinker notes that practically all the great philosophers in the historical development of western civilization (and he has much more respect for them than is

commonly imagined), came forward, not as specialists in this or that part of philosophy, eschewing responsibility for the other parts, but as thinkers with an integrated world view, which set up certain unified connections and relations among the several fields, including the social. Democritus, Plato, Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, Francis Bacon, Hobbes, Spinoza, Kant, and Hegel, to mention only a few well known names, all fall into this category. It is true that not all of these thinkers contributed equally, or equally well, to all fields of philosophy. Nevertheless, they were all total, rather than partial, philosophers. They accepted responsibility for dealing with the totality; hence, they regarded it as quite natural if the work they did in one field was judged also in terms of its connections with other fields. To them, a partial philosopher would have meant a contradiction in terms. That is to say, in their view, an individual who regarded himself as the sort of "specialist" in logic or esthetics, for example, whose work had nothing to do with any ontology or social philosophy (or *vice versa*), would be no philosopher at all, or, at least, not a conscious philosopher. In the end, everyone comes to terms with life as a whole in his own way (the alternative is suicide); even the most unwilling or ignorant becomes a philosopher *malgré lui*. Life forces him to act out a certain philosophy, or, what is more likely, several contradictory philosophies simultaneously, if he is lacking in clarity and discipline.

This attitude, which, so far as it goes, is characteristic alike of "classical" philosophers and Soviet thinkers, is in no way inimical to specialization as such. On the contrary, it usually recognizes the value of specialization and is eager to utilize its advantages. The attitude in question is simply the insistence that intelligent specialization can only proceed within a unified framework of the whole—a point that hardly needs laboring. It is also clear that such a framework is not automatically present: it must be worked out. If those who call themselves philosophers

do not work it out, who can be expected to do so? To deal consciously with the totality is the philosopher's peculiar "specialty."

It need hardly be said that it would be a mistake to convey the impression that the Soviet philosopher stands for any such attitude as, "back to the classics." He does not wish to go back to any "classic" synthesis but forward to a new synthesis. At the same time his attitude towards the outstanding philosophic systems of the past is in no way a derogatory one; on the contrary, he pays them the compliment of profound and detailed study. Strictly speaking, he does not feel himself to be in competition with them; his predominant attitude in approaching them is not one of "agreement" or "disagreement." His basic approach to them and to everything else, as we shall see, is an historical one. He regards them, as he does himself, as phases in a development. He sees in them his own roots, as he does those of his antagonists also. And in the whole movement of philosophy he sees an organic relationship to the movement of society. We have already looked into certain reasons, and shall examine others, why the Soviet philosopher takes this attitude, and what it means in terms of its concrete implications. We shall also see that he has his own challenging explanation for the historically exceptional fragmentation, the uncoordinated specialization which is so characteristic of our age. But here we are concerned with general traits.

GENERAL TRAITS OF THE MATERIALIST WORLD VIEW

In general, the Soviet philosopher feels that his philosophy is a complete, but not a completed, world view. It is systematically worked out, but is not (and never will be) a closed system. In this regard, the relationship to science is vital, for the Soviet philosopher looks upon his field as a science. He wants his philosophy to be precise and systematic, as science is, and at the

same time, like science, to be open to unending possibilities of change and improvement. Although science cannot be expected at any one moment to tell us the whole story of the universe, especially before it is finished, there is no inherent incommensurability between what it tells us and the absolute truth; it is a matter of completeness—of range and depth.

Thus the dialectical materialist can see no reason for paying respect to the current of mysticism in contemporary philosophy. As he sees it, this current helps to encourage the feeling that perhaps science after all deals only with an inessential aspect of things, that it cannot come to grips with reality. The pre-occupation with "mystery," the emphasis on the "limitations" of the human mind, the eagerness not to attribute too much significance to science, to imply that there are reservations which must be entertained—all this serves to veil a deep rooted challenge to the scientific approach (and hence, to the essential rationality of the universe) which makes itself felt, without, for the most part, becoming open and explicit. People seem to fear that to commit themselves to science would be to lose a dimension, to forego emotional depth, adventure, excitement, ecstasy. They daily forget that the scientific picture of the universe, as it unfolds, leaves far behind all that the human imagination had dared to vision in its "freest" flights. Historically speaking, science has proved to be an epic adventure of the human spirit which has enriched beyond measure man's conception of his world and the possibilities of his life.

In other words, there is a difference between an infinitely complex universe and a mystery; it is the difference between self-reliance and helplessness, between the fascinating and the fearful. To think of the universe as essentially mysterious is defeatist; it means to think of our most basic problems as insoluble in principle.

The dialectical materialist is anything but a defeatist. The fact that life is full of passages of bitterness and violence, and

that the path of humanity has lain through so much agony does not seem to him to be any warrant for declaring the world to be incomprehensible. Neither does it seem to him any warrant for embracing suffering or martyrdom. It simply seems to him to be a challenge to discover the causes, and thus put ourselves in a position to better the situation. In his view, as we shall see, the causes are hardly metaphysical. The universe is much too big to be anti-human or pro-human on principle. At the same time it cannot be regarded as indifferent to us since it is our only universe and, vast as it is, everything that happens in it is interconnected. Given the fact that man is a rational animal, the dialectical materialist has faith in the future of humanity precisely because the universe is not simple. (Were it really simple, human nature would indeed be essentially tragic, and man's capacity for knowledge would be original sin.) But as it is, the universe holds open immense, unending evolutionary perspectives; humanity is probably in its most tearful infancy, when the heart can be broken daily and mend over night.

Consequently, the dialectical materialist will not be found either excoriating the universe or hymning mystical paeans to it. He takes it seriously but not personally. He is neither Pollyana nor pessimist. He is an optimist, if it comes to that, but not primarily on ontological grounds. He feels that the universe gives us an opportunity and leaves the rest to us.

Thus the dialectical materialist feels at home in the universe not because he imagines that it was created for man, but because he takes nature without reservations. He is a thorough going naturalist who rejects supernaturalism in any form, including the form of polite or ambiguous silence. His reasoning in this regard is very simple and by no means original. If the universe is eternal, it certainly had no beginning in time. A principle like that of the conservation of energy, or, in general, the impossibility of getting something out of nothing, or nothing out of something, is here decisive. If the universe can have no begin-

ning or end, it can have no creator; the whole problem of its creation or origin is logically superfluous. Since the universe is by definition the totality, there can be nothing beyond it or outside of it. It absolutely dwarfs everything else, because anything else can only be a finite part of the infinite whole, and there cannot be two infinities. Such a universe needs no supernatural realm to give it logical support or moral dignity. It must be sufficient unto itself, for it includes everything that exists.

A universe infinite and eternal, rational in character, pervaded by law, knowable by man, complex but not mystical, sufficiently humanistic but not anthropomorphic, to be believed in rather than blindly trusted, to be taken naturally rather than suspiciously, as an opportunity rather than a promise—such are some of the important traits of the universe as the dialectical materialist sees it. However, he would say that its most important traits, its defining characteristics, even though implicit in the account so far rendered, have hardly as yet been mentioned.

WHAT DOES MATERIALISM MEAN?

Let us approach these defining characteristics through a direct consideration of the meaning of the terms materialism and dialectical. It is not easy for many of us to approach the term materialism without prejudice. In our cultural climate the word materialist is seldom used except as a term of condemnation or abuse, and the weirdest and most exaggerated notions are conventionally associated with it. It is a fact that the world of scholarship is subject to certain waves of what might be called academic fashions, which are accepted by the vast majority of scholars as thoughtlessly and uncritically, and with as much hesitation to depart from the beaten path as the fashions in clothes are accepted by the general public. However, it does not follow that because fashions are arbitrary, they are profitless. Someone

or something always gains from the blind acceptance of certain conventions, a result which involves a temptation, not easily resisted, to encourage their perpetuation.

Whatever may be the precise motivations involved, the ordinary conception of the materialist or materialism that is formed in our minds bears as little resemblance to the actual philosophers or their actual beliefs as the picture of the Catholic or the Jew built up by the Ku Klux Klan bears to the actual Catholic or the actual Jew. Everything that is gross, brutish and cynical has been freely attributed to materialism without the slightest regard for what is to be found in the works of materialists. The strange fact is that almost no one, even among their loudest opponents, takes the trouble to study their writings, which are quite explicit and readily available. Fantastic as it may appear, there almost seems to be a kind of "gentleman's" agreement that here is one school you may condemn without examining, to which you may be unfair with impunity, to which you may ascribe all sorts of absurdities without fear of contradiction. In fact, as things stand now, the chances are that no matter how inaccurate your observations concerning materialism may be, so long as they are abusive, you will be generally applauded, whereas, no matter how careful and accurate a report you may offer, so long as it is not condemnatory, you will be sharply attacked.

The existence of such a situation re-emphasizes the truth of what John Stuart Mill was moved to say when he witnessed a similar unhealthy approach to and distorted conception of the philosophy of utilitarianism. His measured words bear repeating: "It may not be superfluous to notice a few of the more common misapprehensions . . . even those which are so obvious and gross that it might appear impossible for any person of candour and intelligence to fall into them; since persons, even of considerable mental endowments, often give themselves so little trouble to understand the bearings of any opinion against which

they entertain a prejudice, and men are in general so little conscious of this voluntary ignorance as a defect, that the vulgarest misunderstandings of ethical doctrines are continually met with in the deliberate writings of persons of the greatest pretensions both to high principle and to philosophy." [1]

One result of this situation is that the growing student receives what may be called an anti-materialist bias in the course of his education to an extent of which he is rarely conscious. He very seldom if ever meets anyone who calls himself a materialist, and if he were told that he was about to do so, he would probably half expect to see some hardened creature of debauchery who was not only a confirmed sinner, but who was a prey to the additional moral monstrosity of preferring the lower to the higher on "principle." It is a kind of fashion in piety to be suspicious of matter, of "physical" things of "this" world, or at least to talk as if one were, to regard them as somehow tainted, as a likely source of evil and corruption that had best be avoided, or at least looked down upon with contempt. No doubt our Puritan heritage, stronger and more alive than most people suspect, has something to do with the fact that matter, like pleasure, (or even utility) has a bad *name* among us. We do not forego the things themselves, but the acceptance of such a philosophic evaluation of them often gives us a false sense of shame, vulgarizes our enjoyments and makes candor and integrity of character particularly difficult.

The obverse of this unconsciously acquired anti-materialist bias is an equally unconsciously acquired pro-idealist bias. For the talking down of "matter" is usually accompanied by a talking up of "ideas," "spirit" and the like. It is accepted as a truism *of discourse* by every high school child that the main, the superior, the lasting values lie in what is intangible, immaterial, and that the mark of a higher character is an *expressed* scorn for what is tangible and material. When they talk or write in this

[1] *Utilitarianism*, chap II.

fashion they are praised and applauded, especially by their elders. It thus becomes insensibly taken for granted that there is an opposition between matter and ideas, between material things and ideals, that one must choose between them, and that "materialist" is the name of one who deliberately rejects ideal and spiritual values in favor of material goods and licentious indulgence.

The fact that there never has been a materialist in the entire history of philosophy whose thought would answer to this conception has, unfortunately, not prevented its widespread confusion with materialism. There have been philosophers termed sensualists and cynics whose teachings involve such notions. However, the philosopher who calls himself a materialist shows no inclination to reject the goods of the mind, the finer values of the arts and sciences, the ideal of helping and improving the lives of others. He does reject supernaturalism, it is true, and if it could be demonstrated that the only genuine spiritual values are those connected with supernaturalism, then it would follow that not only the materialist, but many another philosopher as well, would be forced to renounce any claim to the things of the spirit. But such a thesis would hardly command general agreement. The materialist does not love matter more than spirit. He takes the position, as we have seen, that matter and ideals are organically connected, that matter, as the basis and source of the higher values, thereby itself attains a higher status.

People naturally tend to avoid prejudicial labels, and another result of the general situation is that a good deal of thinking that might otherwise be called materialistic presents itself as humanistic, naturalistic, empirical, positivistic, agnostic and the like. Much of it, in Engels' view, could appropriately be termed "shame-faced materialism." [2] This whole situation is the more strange as, from an historical point of view, materialism has not only a long and distinguished philosophic ancestry, but one that

[2] *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, Introduction.

is at many points organically connected with the development of our priceless democratic tradition, as, for example, in the leading materialist of the ancient Greek world, Democritus, and in a whole school of materialist philosophers in eighteenth century France who paved the way for the French Revolution.

What, then, is actually meant by materialism as the term is here used? We have seen something of what it means in social and political fields, in ethics and in the philosophy of art. We have at this point raised the question in what would be technically termed its ontological sense. Ontology is the study of what reality or the universe is. It is the broadest and in some ways the most basic part of philosophy, since it represents an attempt to disclose the fundamental, common traits of existence taken as a whole, to discover the kind of totality of which we are all a part. We have already sketched some of the fundamental traits of the universe as they appear to the dialectical materialist. What would he add to this general sketch by way of deepening and sharpening his concept? To say that materialism means that matter is reality, while it is correct enough, does not perhaps, convey much. It might even be misunderstood to involve a denial of the reality of anything that is not tangible or directly perceivable by the physical senses. But the dialectical materialist does not seek to deny the existence of anything because it is abstract or of moral quality; he is not interested in trying to "simplify" the universe, although he is interested in removing from the path of understanding certain obstacles which he considers fantastic precisely because they over-simplify the infinity of existence and do not meet the demands arising out of its very complexity.

In saying that matter is reality, he means that everything that is real derives from nature, from the system of things rooted in matter and knowable by man. If this natural and material world is infinitely rich and complex in its manifestations, which the evidence would indicate, how can it help being reality? Is there

room for any other reality? To the dialectical materialist these questions are rhetorical, since it seems clear to him that anything over and above infinity becomes a source of embarrassment to the thinker. In other words, if the natural universe is infinite, it is sufficient to account for everything. Everything is a part of it and can have its being in nothing else.

But what precisely is matter? In the nature of the case, this is a question which, at this stage (as indeed, at any stage) in the development of human knowledge, cannot be answered fully, as if everything were known. The whole past is not known, and we must always leave something for the future, no matter how impressive our knowledge may be in the present. The one thing on which the dialectical materialist insists is that we do not create matter, that the act of knowing matter, for example, does not bring into existence the matter known. In other words, he insists that there is a universe surrounding us, of which we are a part. He has great respect for mind, but he can see no intelligible sense, once science is taken seriously, in which mind could be regarded as prior to matter, in either the temporal or the logical order. If this issue is not made into a mystery, it seems clear to him that it should be settled by the fact that science is in no position to give the slightest credence to any view except that the human mind is a relatively late development in the long and complex evolution of organic matter, and, hence, that there was a universe before this mind emerged. Matter is the general name of the objective source in which all things are rooted.

WHAT DOES DIALECTICAL MEAN?

On these general propositions there would be substantial if not perfectly unanimous agreement among materialists of all times and places. Our materialist, however, is of a particular sort—a "dialectical" materialist. Now if the term materialism is enough, under prevailing conditions, to frighten off a good

many people, the combination of these two terms is often regarded as something which caps the climax of a hopeless situation. It is true that we live in a day of advertising, when everything seems to demand a "catchy" label, and when it is maintained by some that even the name given to a philosophy should be determined by its power to attract attention or to avoid arousing local prejudices, rather than by its logical fitness to indicate the nature of the philosophy. But perhaps one should not make too many concessions to advertising, which, in any event, may be a passing phenomenon, and there is much to be said for the educational value of attempting to overcome local prejudices, particularly when we are dealing with something basic, like a philosophy of life. This one, in particular, comes forward as an international philosophy (which originated before the days of advertising, and might possibly even survive them) and it would stand to lose a good deal in historical continuity if it tried to change its name in each generation or locale. In any case, it is one of the important tasks of scholarship (which was not rendered superfluous by the advent of advertising) to bridge the gap between the past and the present, between languages or cultures, to convey essential meanings and far-reaching visions in spite of local idioms and the Idols of the Market Place.

The term dialectical is a very ancient one in philosophy, and like all other ancient terms, without exception, in this field, it has had a variety of meanings at different times and in the work of different philosophers. That is to say, it had a history. But we can usually find some common thread running through the history of a given thing, and in the case of the word dialectical, the common thread is the notion of movement. Originally it seems to have meant the movement of an argument between two disputants holding opposite theses, and today it is often used to indicate any elaborate or complex movement of thought. Plato used the term "dialectics" in his *Republic* to denote the highest

of all intellectual undertakings, which he considered to be the tracing of the ultimate relations among the most basic ideas, which, to him, were the final reality. That is to say, Plato's dialectics was idealistic.

The conception of dialectics, however, which primarily influenced Karl Marx and his followers was that of Hegel, a dialectical idealist (*the* dialectical idealist) of the modern period. Hegel held that reality was Idea, and that its essential nature was expressed in movement, development, transformation. Thus the term dialectical in combination with materialism means the view, not only that reality is material, but that this matter is constantly in motion.

There are, in addition, finer shadings. "Dialectical" suggests, not just any kind of motion, but motion that is complex and at the same time possessed of a basic pattern expressible as a rational principle. Furthermore, it suggests that the degree of complexity is sufficiently great for the pattern of movement and change to involve the transformation of the thing moving and changing, that is, its development or evolution into a qualitatively new condition. In the technical terms of logic, wherein "non-A" is the "contradictory" of "A," this pattern may be said to be one that is characterized by contradiction or opposition, and that is expressible in the formula, "From A to non-A." So far as terminology is concerned, the question might be asked, is there any adjective capable of expressing these characteristics better than the word dialectical? "Evolutionary" or "dynamic" might be suggested, but they lack the logical connotations (which, as we shall see in the following chapter, are quite important), attaching to the other term.

EVIDENCE FOR DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

In any case, the dialectical materialist would hold that he is not responsible for the terminological situation. If his terminol-

ogy is complex, it is because he finds reality to be complex. Let us now approach the matter from this side, which, of course, is the decisive side.

What kind of evidence impels the dialectical materialist to adopt this view and to choose this sort of terminology? The evidence he has in mind is supplied by every field of science, natural and social, and is found at every level of existence—inorganic, organic, social, mental, esthetic and moral. Everything moves, changes, develops, grows, becomes transformed. This is the common report from every quarter, the ancient insight of Heracleitus and so many other thinkers at the very dawn of philosophy, now documented by an unmatched wealth of detailed investigations. Astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology and all their collateral fields of study tell us that they can find no subject matter that is immune to change. The fixed, the unmoving is driven from one refuge to another until at last it inhabits only the realm of nostalgic imagination. There was a time when we thought that at least the essential patterns of astronomical relationships were changeless. Now we know that not even the fixed stars are fixed, although we continue to call them so. (Language is always slow to catch up.) We discover ever more basic constituent elements in physical and chemical phenomena, but the more basic our discoveries, the more we see of incredibly dynamic patterns of movement and, the less we see of anything static or unchangeable. We used to think that organic species were permanent, but now biological evolution is as firmly established as anything science can offer. Perhaps without quite realizing it or exactly wanting to, modern science has carried us from the conception of a universe essentially static but characterized by more or less superficial and relative changes, to the conception of a universe essentially dynamic but characterized by more or less superficial and relative stabilities.

THREE FUNDAMENTAL LAWS

Now is the universal change or motion simply a fluid jumble about which no more can be said than that it is not standing still? Hardly. It is not difficult to pick out certain basic patterns and features that always accompany the process of change, certain general conditions which underlie the motion, development and evolution that take place in our world. The dialectical materialist feels that Hegel correctly grasped the implications of a dynamic reality, even though he conceived of it idealistically, and that his ontological laws, reconstructed on a materialist basis, express with great fidelity what is basically involved in a universe of constant change. Let us make an attempt to clarify the unfamiliar terminology in which these laws are couched, and to see through it to the core of meaning which they possess. They are three in number and are called the Law of Strife, Interpenetration and Unity of Opposites;[1] the Law of Transformation of Quantity into Quality and *vice versa*; the Law of the Negation of the Negation.

What does the first law mean and what is the evidence for its validity? It says a great deal in its bizarre language. In the first place, it expresses the thought that everything which exists is made up of opposing, that is, differently or oppositely acting elements or forces. That is to say, whenever we analyze the internal content of any existing thing we never find an undifferentiated, inactive, homogeneous mass; we always find a scene of interrelated elements, of interacting forces or tendencies, one of which exerts influence in one direction, another in another, and so on. When we say in ordinary language that any existing thing, to be recognized as such, must have a certain structure, an organization of parts each of which plays a certain

[1] This law is sometimes worded as Unity of Opposites, as Unity and Strife of Opposites, as Interpenetration and Unity of Opposites or simply as Interpenetration of Opposites.

role in the make-up of the thing, we have in mind what the dialectical materialist here has in mind. Each component part of a thing cannot play the same role. All the forces involved cannot be alike and moving in the same direction. If they were, and there were nothing to resist them, they would simply sweep on their way, so to speak, and no distinguishable thing would there emerge, even temporarily. (The dialectical materialist speaks of "opposites" here in the sense that different forces coming into contact in the same field have the status of opposing forces.)

We need not be scientific specialists to realize that the simplest physical, chemical or biological analysis shows that any inorganic or organic object is made up of differently or oppositely acting component elements and forces. In an ordinary table, for example, gravitational attraction exerts a constant pull towards the center of the earth. The table must be so constructed that the interrelation of its parts is such as to overcome this pull, else the table will not stand up, even for an instant. At the same time oxidation is taking place in respect to various parts, while the mere action of friction is continuously taking its toll. In fact, under the influence of a whole host of physical and chemical processes, the table begins to grow less resistant, less rigid, to loosen up, to lose mass, to age, so to speak, even before it is completely born. Throughout every cubic inch of its content, there is taking place every instant the tremendous dynamic action of molecules, atoms, electrons, the constituent units of all material things. Only to superficial observation does the table present itself as a stationary, inert and solid mass. In reality, as we now know from the accumulation of scientific knowledge, the table is mostly empty space the content of which is a "mass of whirling electrons" each of which is a repository of tremendous energy and all of which are ceaselessly acting and reacting in all sorts of groups and combinations which check, resist and modify one another in varying degrees in accordance

with the particular physical and chemical conditions obtaining at the time and place. Whatever else these physical and chemical conditions may involve, they certainly involve an "interpenetration" of opposing forces and elements. In regard to the terminology used, if we should say "dynamic interaction" we would convey about the same thing as "strife and interpenetration." The word "strife" is employed to indicate the opposition of forces, while "interpenetration" signifies the interrelated, interacting contacts involved.

We have so far been speaking directly of inorganic things. We will readily recognize, however, that, in the case of organic beings, in addition to the physical and chemical processes (to which they are also subject) living things undergo the effects of various other processes which involve oppositely acting forces and elements of an even more complex nature, on the bio-chemical and biological level. Consequently, we need not dwell upon the applicability of this law, or that portion of it which we have so far analyzed, to the sphere of organic phenomena. If it applies to the inorganic, it will, in the nature of the case, apply all the more to the organic.

In regard to this first law, we still have to inquire about the remaining part of it, and about its applicability to types of existence not usually dealt with under the classes organic and inorganic. We say the remaining part of the first law because we have not yet considered the significance of the term "unity" which occurs in the wording, Law of the Strife, Interpenetration and Unity of Opposites. This term is employed to express the fact that the dynamic interaction (or interpenetrating strife) exhibited by the component forces and the elements of any existing thing gives the thing the character of a changing unity. To say that we are dealing with any discernible thing at all is to say that we are dealing with something that possesses the characteristic of unity. It (the "thing") hangs together, at least for the time, in some sort of organized or unified fashion that permits it

to be distinguished from its surroundings and to be dealt with as a separate thing. At the same time it is clear that the unity which it possesses is not a frozen or stationary one. If it were, the thing would be immune to change. But we cannot discover anything that possesses such immunity. The dialectical materialist finds the cause of this universal condition in the dynamic nature of the component parts of any given thing, and also in the fact that it is ceaselessly interacting with its surroundings and is exposed to the uninterrupted play of outside forces. The result is that the unity reached is never permanent. It has the character of a dynamic equilibrium that sooner or later breaks up just because it is dynamic.

Some things may change very slowly, but they change none the less. Moreover, the change proceeds continuously, however slow the rate may be in terms of manifest effects. Just as we have no evidence that anything is impervious to change, so we have no evidence that there are any periods of time during which the processes of change are somehow suspended. In fact, all our evidence shows that these processes cannot be suspended. Our table may look about the same from day to day, yet we know that chemical and physical changes are taking place in it during every second. Gravitation exerts an uninterrupted pull; the activity of the atoms and molecules can no more be stilled than the universe can be stopped; chemical processes go on wherever certain conditions and chemical elements are present. You or I may retain the same appearance from moment to moment, yet we know that a whole series of biological changes are continuously taking place within us in such a fashion that it is the literal truth to say that you are not quite the same person at the end of any sentence which you utter as you were at the beginning, no matter how brief the instant may be, or how rapidly you may speak. Anyone who reads this has only to reflect on the changes that have taken place in himself since the age of one day, and to ask himself when they took place.

There is no instant, however brief, during which nothing happens, during which the universe stands still and the processes which make up change cease their operation. Legend has it that the pronouncement of the ancient philosopher Heracleitus, one of the first exponents of dialectical priciples, to the effect that a person could not step into the same river twice, called forth from one of his disciples the acute commentary, "Not even once."

Such are some of the effects of a dynamic universe. While there is continuous change, there are also relative stabilities, temporary unities reached as a result of the complex interpenetration, the interplay of forces, energies and elements which come into contact with one another. While everything is on the move, the very interplay of movement forms patterns distinguishable as such for a greater or lesser period of time. However, it is clear that it is the movement and change that are continuous while the stability is temporary. In other words, the strife and interpenetration mentioned in the first law are absolute conditions, while the unity represents something relative. A universe where everything changes is a universe where nothing is changeless except change.

The analysis so far has been made in terms of what are usually called inorganic and organic phenomena. But what of other types of existence? Does the law under discussion apply in any sense to social phenomena, to ideas, or to existences in the realm of moral and esthetic values? The position taken is that all the laws of materialist dialectics apply to all existences whatsoever (although in terms of different concrete conditions) and not only to those on the physical, chemical and biological levels. For example, the Soviet philosopher points to the fact that whenever we analyze social phenomena, whether it be society as a whole, a given civilization, period or country, a particular institution or social group, even a single policy, custom or action, we find, once again, a complex of component

elements and forces in dynamic interaction. Society is composed of people and the groups which they form. People are not all alike in their characters, habits, hopes, desires, objectives. Neither are groups. Every human being is a complex of conflicting tendencies and desires. The social animal is constantly subject to the pull of opposing social forces quite as much as the inorganic object to chemical or physical forces. Nothing social is composed of an undifferentiated homogeneous mass any more than an inorganic phenomenon is. Society is obviously active, moving, changing; it is something that has a history, and will continue to have a history so long as it continues to exist. The movement, change and history which society goes through are not the result of any artificial imposition of a dynamic element from the outside upon an entity which is naturally inert. They are the result of the native dynamism inherent in the parts of which society is composed, parts which come into contact with one another in their differing tendencies, influences and directions of movement.

In other words, we find here on a new level, in terms of more complex phenomena, the same kind of continuous interpenetration and strife which we discovered previously. We find also the same kind of relative and temporary unity. A given civilization, state, institution or custom may have a longer or shorter history, but it has a *history*, with a beginning (a growth out of something prior) and an end (a growth into something further). Even during its history, in fact, just because it is having a history, it is not the same from year to year or from moment to moment, any more than a person is. The social unit is also a changing unity. Here again, the interpenetrating strife which sooner or later dissolves all patterns (forming new ones in the process) represents an absolute, continuous condition, while the unities reached are relative and temporary.

While we shall consider in detail in the next chapter the significance of the laws of materialist dialectics in their applica-

tion to ideas, to problems of knowledge and the general field of logic, we can indicate at least briefly at this point the nature of the basic situation. Ideas considered as logical concepts having meaning to the human mind evidently exist, but they do not possess the type of existence characteristic of sticks and stones, plants and animals. While ideas are not directly perceivable by the physical senses, they are certainly connected with things that are. They are usually called abstractions, and the word is revealing in its literal significance, namely, something which has been taken out of, (*abstracted from*) something else.

The position of the dialectical materialist is that ideas do not exist prior to or independently of material things, but are made up of aspects, attributes or qualities abstracted from material things by the human mind and sometimes arranged in new, unusual or fantastic combinations. However, he points out that once the process of abstraction has been performed, the resultant idea has its own existence on the logical or conceptual level, and cannot simply be regarded as an emaciated or devitalized thing, any more than a flower is a dead seed or a seed a small flower. While an idea has its own existence, it does not possess an altogether independent existence (any more than anything else). It is not only connected with things at other levels of existence, as we have seen, but is connected, in logical interaction, with its surrounding context of other ideas and meanings. The logical content, the meaning of an idea exists only in relation to these other ideas and meanings. It has content only in terms of its relations with them. Take a single idea, such as citizenship, and try to express its content without referring to other ideas and concepts. What content has such an idea except *in relation* to concepts like people, state, oath, birth, naturalization, to mention only a few, and the things to which they correspond and from which they have been abstracted.

In this sense, the internal logical content of an idea is made up of interacting elements, elements which are different from

one another, whose tendency and influence are in opposing directions, whose lines of relationship are traceable to different quarters, but whose interplay, in terms of a given combination and pattern, constitutes a logical unity so long as that particular combination and pattern are relevant to and consistent with the rest of the universe of discourse and the general movement of knowledge. That is to say, not forever, unless indeed, science can reach a point where no further movement or progress is possible.

Man is a rational animal, states the classic Aristotelian definition. In this instance the content of the idea, man, is rendered in terms of a certain combination of two other ideas, rationality and animality, a combination such that rationality becomes a qualifying condition, a specific difference setting off man within the class animal from other members which that class includes. In short, our analysis clearly shows us an interpenetration of opposing or differently acting elements, the temporary unity of which constitutes a distinguishable entity. It is not a metaphor to speak of *logical interaction*, or of the *movement* of thought, unless logic and thought themselves have only metaphorical existence. The units of logical content of which an idea is made up are not inertly juxtaposed without vital jointure. If they were, they would remain parts, but never form a whole—a unity capable of hanging together in its own way.

However, it would be too much to expect it to hang together forever. Aristotle's definition of man as a rational animal, for instance, no longer commands the prestige it once did. The predominant trend of biology and psychology in recent years has considerably modified the classic idea of rationality as an exclusively human attribute, especially the classic assumption that this rationality belonged to a "mind" which was apart from, or opposed to, or an agency of control over, the body. The proportion of psychologists who could be found to agree with the proposition that man has a mind of this sort which is the source

of rationality, of intelligence, whereas animals have only bodies but no minds and consequently possess no rationality or intelligence would be as noticeably small today as it was noticeably large centuries ago. Many psychologists today talk about the "mind" very little or not at all. They are not sure but that it is perhaps a superfluous concept. The contemporary psychologist is quite sure of the brain, however, and deals with that in great detail. At the same time he is well aware that all animals possess brains and has therefore boldly developed a concept of intelligence as a function of bodily action which is not at all the exclusive possession of the human species or the product of an immaterial mind. While people may differ in their opinions as to whether this situation elevates the animals or degrades man, it is easily seen that it has wrought considerable change in such concepts as animality and rationality, and hence, man. In other words, the idea of man changes and grows because the logical elements of which this idea is composed are amenable to change and in process of development. Ideas have a history in which the new grows out of the old not unlike the way in which this process takes place in the world of things.

The situation is not essentially different in the field of values. Works of art and moral ideals are also made up of elements which exhibit internal contrast, opposing lines of influence, dynamic interaction. Here also nothing stands still. The strife of opposing elements on the value level is something without which the field of value problems would hardly exist. To locate the nature of this strife and its mode of resolution in the given esthetic or moral phenomenon might almost be said to be the Alpha and Omega of methodology in these fields. In the light of the foregoing analysis, it is hardly necessary to dwell anew upon these considerations.

The first law of materialist dialectics expresses the fact that we live in a universe of change, change which affects all things pervasively and continuously. However, that is not all that can

be said about change. The second law, the Law of Transformation of Quantity into Quality and *vice versa*, points out that this change is not merely quantitative, but involves qualitative developments. If the first law guarantees history, the second guarantees that that history cannot be merely a mechanical accumulation of quantitative factors, but always involves the emergence of new qualities, that is, of complexes of properties not possessed before.[2]

All change represents, in the first instance, a quantitative increase or decrease in respect to certain qualities already present in the given object. For example, as water is heated, the result, up to a certain point, is confined to a quantitative rise in the temperature of a liquid. That is, nothing is produced beyond hotter and hotter water. However, after a certain point is reached in the quantitative increase, the quality of the thing being dealt with suffers a change from a liquid to a gaseous state: we observe the transition into steam. This change represents a qualitative transformation because it is clear that the properties of steam are not simply the properties of hot water increased in degree. The water has become something that is no longer water. At the same time the new qualitative state is not a condition apart from or unconnected with the old qualities. It is something into which the old qualities become transformed by continued quantitative

[2] "Quality is defined as that 'definiteness owing to which things, phenomena, processes, mark themselves off from one another and which makes them what they are.' But this qualitative definiteness (whether of things or ideas) 'is not something permanent and unchanging as metaphysicians think' It is not something irreconcilably opposed to matter or to quantity, but something that grows naturally out of them, along with them as part and parcel of their growth. The 'properties' of a thing are the vital lines not so much of communication as of transportation, by means of which the quality of the thing is connected with other qualities and passes over into them. Qualities, so viewed, form a system of inter-relations in motion, a system of *inter-transformations*. This system does not exist over and above the material order, but is the material order." Somerville, "Ontological Problems of Contemporary Dialectical Materialism" (Paper presented before American Philosophical Association, Princeton, 1937. Published, *Journal of Philosophy*, April 28, 1938.) The definition quoted is from the *Bolshaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopedia*, Vol. 22, p. 155.

increases or decreases. If the temperature of water decreases, for example, the result, for a while, is colder and colder water. But there comes a point at which the water changes into ice, a solid, the properties of which are not decreased amounts of the properties of a liquid. A solid contains certain properties which are not present in any degree whatsoever in a liquid. It can be cut to shape, for example, used as a stationary base for certain types of vertical constructions, and so on. We cannot find a little bit of ice in water before it reaches the freezing point. We find no ice at all. An acorn is not a small oak tree which grows larger merely by quantitative increase of existing properties. The acorn does not have a small trunk, tiny branches and microscopic leaves.[3] These things are totally absent until a new level of development is reached. Hence, the new level of development, when it is reached, cannot be mechanically "reduced" to the old, as if it represented merely greater or lesser amounts of the properties previously present. Even in the simplest mathematical relationships, the addition of one to one, for example, we see the transition to new properties; otherwise, two would not be an even number, but would merely be twice as odd as one. The newly emerged qualities are quite as real as the old qualities out of which they emerged. *All quantitative changes sooner or later produce new qualities, while it is equally true that the only way to develop new qualities is by quantitative changes of those already present.*

This law, like the preceding, is not confined to such fields as physics, chemistry and biology. Does the field of social phenomena, for example, exhibit only quantitative change? Hardly! Society today is not simply a larger tribal community than that which existed in primitive times, any more than an adult is merely a larger infant. Certain social phenomena and problems

[3] It is interesting to note that the idea used to be seriously entertained that the human seed was in fact a tiny replica of a human being—a curious instance of the influence of mechanistic categories of thought. In certain textbooks illustrations could be found picturing this microscopic man.

can emerge only at a certain stage of social development. Just as modern capitalist manufacture is not simply enlarged handicrafts manufacture, the problems of the trade unions in present day industry are not larger versions of the problems of guilds. The history of society is not only as complex as, but is more complex than the history of physical things or of plants and animals. Hence, it is quite as rich in its capacity for qualitative developments.

As we have seen, ideas, art and morals also have histories. Are their histories simple? Are the changes which take place in the content of these fields merely quantitative? If they were, the problems associated with them would not be as complex and difficult as they are. We find in each case a long and involved evolution, a passing through various levels of development or stages of growth which mark off qualitative differences in the character of the subject matter being dealt with, not only in relation to these fields as a whole, but also in relation to the units of content into which they are divided.

In other words, it is not only universal change which we witness, but universal evolution, universal transformation. In this process we always find that the accumulation of quantitative changes, which is often so gradual as to be imperceptible, is followed by comparatively rapid and violent change which ushers in a new qualitative condition. The Soviet philosopher refers to this transition from the merely quantitative to the qualitative as a "leap," and points out that any adequate conception of evolution must recognize the existence of these leaps. Change without leaps would be quantitative, but not qualitative; it would probably be change without evolution. At the same time the leap itself takes up a certain period of time, during which the phenomenon has a particularly mixed character in relation to its phases of development. There is a point at which it is difficult to say whether we are dealing with water or steam,

adolescent or adult, seed or plant, while a leap such as a revolution, during which society takes a qualitative plunge like that from capitalism to socialism may take years. While all change is continuous, its rate is by no means uniform.

The Law of the Negation of the Negation expresses the fact that the emergence of new qualities out of quantitative changes in the old is a process which goes on endlessly, which takes place at each new qualitative level. The new qualitative state is regarded as a "negation" of the old one, and the same interpenetration and strife of opposing elements which operated to produce continuous change at the old level operate here also, so that, in time, the negation is itself always negated. Each new phase of development is a temporary synthesis which contains the seeds of further development.

OUR EVOLVING UNIVERSE

Our dynamic universe is one that opens up unending perspectives, and contains infinitely rich potentialities because it does not simply exist, but evolves. The three laws of materialist dialectics may be said to be an attempt to express the ontological significance of evolution, to indicate the conditions involved in universal and continuous change that is qualitative as well as quantitative. The Soviet thinker does not refer to his theory as "metaphysics" because of the fact that most of the traditional systems of metaphysics have stood for a theory of reality which laid the emphasis on conceptions of the unmoving, the changeless, the non-material and the supernatural. Consequently, he will usually be found to use the word "metaphysical" as synonymous with anti-dialectical. Although he has less objection to the term ontology, since it is less freighted with prejudicial connotations, he is inclined to remember that it was coined largely as a synonym for metaphysics. He himself is usually content to refer to

his theory of reality as the general theory of dialectical materialism, which he proceeds to subdivide, in its application to broad areas, into the dialectics of nature (including the natural sciences), the dialectics of thought (including logic and epistemology) and the dialectics of society (including what we call social philosophy, social sciences, ethics and the philosophy of art).

Whatever the terminology, the basic problems associated with ontology or metaphysics are taken very seriously and dealt with in detail. In our analysis we have considered only some of the central issues, yet even in the brief survey that we have made, it is clear that the findings of the Soviet philosopher in this field form an organic bond of interconnection among all fields of investigation. In the next chapter we shall follow out the implications of these findings for what the Soviet philosopher calls the dialectics of thought, in relation to the problem of correct methods of thinking.

It might be well to emphasize explicitly what has been implicit in our discussion so far, namely, that the laws of dialectics in terms of their own content, as well as the nature of their implications and relations with various areas of subject matter are not approached as *a priori* truths or merely in terms of abstract logical deduction. At the same time, the processes of abstraction and deduction are by no means neglected; their use, however, is based upon and controlled by empirical findings. That is to say, the laws of materialist dialectics, as we have seen, are regarded as grounded upon objective scientific evidence drawn from every quarter. The position taken is that all that has been found supports them and nothing that has been found invalidates them. While in their generalized form we may thus accept them as proved principles, we can by no means settle the question of their concrete application to particular fields simply by means of deduction. The evidence so far accumulated in their favor should lead us to employ them as the principal hypotheses or tools in the investigation of further areas of subject matter.

"Not a single principle of dialectics" we are told in an authoritative source, "can be converted into an abstract schema from which, by purely logical means, it would be possible to infer the answer to concrete questions. These principles are a guide to activity and scientific research, not a dogma." [1]

[1] Article, "Dialekticheskii Materialism" in the *Bolshaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopedia*, Vol 22, p 154

CHAPTER VI

THE HUMAN MIND: THE DIALECTICAL METHOD OF THINKING

THE ISSUE BETWEEN MATERIALIST DIALECTICS AND FORMAL LOGIC AS TO THE METHOD OF CORRECT THINKING

A good many people, and some among them who have taken college courses in the principles of logic, will be at a loss to understand what the heading above intends to convey. To them, the term "formal logic" is probably synonymous with the expression, "the method of correct thinking." How, then, could there be any issue between the principles of formal logic and any other principles in relation to the method of correct thinking? Any contrary principles must surely be erroneous if correct thinking itself *is* formal logic.

One fact that may have a bearing on this situation is that we do not sufficiently emphasize the distinction between logic as a theory of correct thinking, and the correct thinking itself, between logic the subject and the subject matter of logic. The basic principles formulated by any philosopher, like Aristotle, who made some very important contributions to the theory of logic (in fact, one might say, originated it as a field of study) are in the nature of an attempt to express and explain what is involved in the phenomena contained in the field. While Aristotle, in his treatises on logic, made the first elaborate and systematic attempt to explain the nature of correct thinking, correct thinking itself, of course, existed long before Aristotle, in exactly the same sense that the stars and the moon existed

before Aristotle's (or anyone else's) theories on astronomy, or that the human body existed before anyone's theories on biology.

(It may be necessary to point out here that we are not using the word theory in its popular derogatory sense, as an unwarranted substitute for facts, but in its scientific sense, as an explanation of facts. This is the sense in which proved principles are still called theories. The law of heat or of gravitation, even when regarded as proved, is called the theory of heat or of gravitation. Without theories, i.e., generalizations which indicate various interrelations among groups of facts, we would have no science whatsoever. We would only have reports of isolated and unconnected facts.)

It would be just as reasonable, for example, to suppose that a person must take a course in physiology in order to digest his food properly, as to imagine that he must take a course in logic before he is able to think correctly. Physiology the study has the same relation to actual physiological processes as logic the study has to actual logical processes. That is, while the proper study of these processes, by revealing what is basically involved in them, ought to help us in dealing with difficulties like poor digestion or poor thinking, it is clear that the study of the process does not create the process being studied. That would be a queer state of affairs indeed, but nevertheless, some such impression in regard to logic seems to have been abroad for a considerable time. Even in the seventeenth century, John Locke felt it necessary to point out that God did not make men animals, and then wait for Aristotle to teach them to think.

In other words, there is a basic distinction between the principles of a science and the subject matter with which these principles are concerned.[1] The principles express fundamental

[1] Even if logic were wholly a "normative" science, it would still be true that the norms laid down are not the same thing as the actual application or embodiment of these norms in some specific subject matter. Moreover, the problem of the adequacy of this or that set of norms would always be present.

truths about the subject matter. One of the reasons why we are led to confuse these two things in any particular field is that we often employ the same word for them both. We say, for example, "his logic" both when we mean someone's reasoning powers, whether he ever studied logic or not, and when we mean someone's treatise expounding the principles of logic. In the same way, we say "his psychology" both when we mean a state of mind, and an exposition of the science. We also say "the physics" of this or that, both when we mean the actual physical processes taking place, and which took place long before there was any field of study called physics, and the science of physics which is formed by the *study* of these processes. The distinction is more clearly seen in physics, in spite of the ambiguity of the word, because the subject matter is tangible and is directly perceived by the senses, whereas the principles, as principles, are intangible. In logic it is a case of thinking about thinking, of intangible subject matter as well as intangible principles. The distinction between subject matter and principles is nevertheless just as important.

The importance of this distinction, in the present instance, revolves around the question of the accuracy and adequacy of the principles. Because logic the study involves thinking about thinking, it does not follow, of course, that anything we think about thinking must be correct. In other words, any given theory of logic, like Aristotle's, is after all, only one possible attempt to explain the subject matter involved. Hence, it should not be regarded as strange if we look upon the principles arrived at by any one thinker in this field as subject to improvement in the light of further developments. There is no more reason why the idea of progress should seem alien in relation to the science of logic than it does in relation to the science of biology or astronomy. Yet the prevailing notion in the minds of students who have finished a course in "logic" is probably not that of a body

of principles subject to continuous progress and improvement, or of a number of issues in respect to which radically different solutions have been advanced. The prevailing notion probably comes closer to the conception that the fundamental principles laid down in the text somehow constitute *logic itself*, that they are in all basic respects eternally correct, subject to debate only in a few relatively minor details.

The theory of logic thus learned is, of course, "formal" logic. The student rarely grasps the historical fact that there are other schools of thought, such as the dialectical (connected in its idealistic version with the name of Hegel, in its materialistic version with Engels and Marx), which takes a basically different approach, not only to matters of detail, but to the central problems of logic.

No doubt there is a variety of causes underlying this situation, some of which may come to light in the course of our discussion. But whatever the causes, the net result is that we are brought up on the formal theory of logic both directly, by being taught it as if there were no really basic alternative, and indirectly, through being influenced by those to whom it has been so taught, through the use of a language system constructed in the light of formalistic conceptions, and in other ways.

To cite only one instance from language, the fact that the noun or pronoun does not change, no matter what changes in tense take place, reflects and tends to perpetuate the notion that the changes which things undergo are not of the essence, that the essence remains static. Language forces me to say. I am a father; I was an infant. The same "I"?

People, generally, whether they have ever studied logic or not, are quite unconscious of the extent to which their thinking is influenced by formalistic principles largely drawn from certain aspects of Aristotle's work. As we shall see, the issue between formal logic and materialist dialectics is not merely an

academic issue. It is an issue which has important consequences for our practical and everyday thinking, for our handling of the most pressing problems of social life. One of the claims of the dialectical materialist, which we shall examine, is that an adherence to formalistic principles serves to encourage and perpetuate (whereas an adherence to dialectical principles would serve to discourage and eradicate) a whole series of fallacies and shortcomings in relation to thought and action in some of the most vital areas of human problems, particularly in the area of social questions.

The way in which the pre-suppositions and categories of formal logic have entered into our habits of thought and, consequently, into the operation of our institutions, is an aspect of our civilization as "curious" and significant as it is neglected. In one sense it is a situation like that of people who have become so used to a certain type of eyeglass that they not only take it for granted that it is the only possible eyeglass, but they scarcely remember that they are wearing eyeglasses at all. It is not that they have perfect vision—far from it—but they are seldom disposed to relate their problems in this regard to the type of eyeglass which they have worn so long. It is always an amusing and instructive experience to ask intellectually trained people in our culture what is the significance of the word "formal" in the expression, formal logic—for example, formal logic as opposed to what other kind of logic? Usually there is either no answer or the answer given is "informal logic!" It never occurs to students (or perhaps to most teachers) to raise this question. Yet it is so significant that if the force of the term formal as it is used in this connection (and it is certainly not used as the opposite of informal) is not appreciated, one will probably not fully understand what formal logic is, or place it in any realistic historical perspective. Let us hope that our examination of the differences between formal and dialectical logic will also throw light on this question.

THE LAWS OF THOUGHT

A good way to approach these differences is to contrast the three traditional "laws of thought" as conceived by formal logic with the implications of the laws of materialist dialectics which we have already considered in the preceding chapter. It may be noted in passing that the value of such an approach does not depend upon such technical questions as whether the traditional laws of identity, non-contradiction, and excluded middle are the *most basic* principles of formal logic, or whether they are construed as laws of things as opposed to thought, or simply as "rules of discourse" or as all three at once. All that we need to recognize, for the present purpose, is that these traditional laws, whether taken or stated in one way or another, are an expression of certain basic and characteristic elements in the "formal" theory of logic.

The laws seem so self-evident (largely because we are brought up on this theory of logic) that it almost appears to be a mark of madness to challenge them. Yet, as we shall see, the dialectical theory confronts them with a challenge as thoroughgoing as it is significant. There are indeed, other contemporary trends in the field of logic which have also advocated certain departures from the traditional laws. However, in contrast to what the dialectical theory offers, these represent but partial revisions, not a challenge to the laws as a whole, or to their essential spirit.

The Law of Identity is usually expressed in the form, A is A. That is, each thing is identical with itself. The Law of Non-Contradiction states that A is not Non-A. That is, each thing is not different from itself. The Law of Excluded Middle states that X is either A or Non-A. That is, any third alternative or middle ground in addition to A and Non-A is excluded. The same thing cannot be both A (or itself) and Non-A (or different from itself) at the same time.

The dialectical materialist holds that these laws are an oversimplification of the nature of existence, as we now know it in the light of the accumulation of scientific knowledge. He holds that they are false because they express only one aspect of existence, and not the most important aspect at that. The three laws place a common emphasis on the separateness of things, the difference or distinction of one thing from another. Each makes this emphasis in a different way—the first affirmatively, the second negatively, the third dichotomously. What they all say is that A is A and cannot be Non-A at the same time. It is clear that we are here confronted with the same problem which we discussed in the preceding chapter. The point is, where can we find any A that is not in process of change—change which, as we saw, does not take place only now and then, but continuously, which does not affect only this or that part of the given thing, but all parts. Where can we find an instant of time during which nothing happens, no change takes place? Evidently, not in this universe. As we have seen, any A that we find always turns out to be in process of change in all of its parts all of the time, and hence, must be called Non-A quite as much as A. To say merely, A is A, expresses only one side of the nature of such an A—its temporary unity or stability. However, to say that A is A and also non-A (Law of Strife, Interpenetration and Unity of Opposites) expresses the continuous process of change and transformation which pervades and constitutes A, as well as its temporary unity, just as the other laws express what inevitably happens in the further history of A.

In other words the dialectical logician is willing to recognize that there is a sense in which A is A, although he regards it as only part of the story. He points out, however, that the formal logician does not rise to the recognition of the sense in which A is also Non-A. The dialectical logician wishes to do justice to both stability and change, to get both into the picture. In doing so, he points to the fact that the overwhelming evidence from all

fields of science is that the element of change is continuous and hence, primary, whereas the element of stability is temporary, hence, secondary.

But, one may say, why reject the Law of Identity? Isn't the principle that A is A also true of a changing A in the sense that a changing *A* is still a changing *A*? There is indeed a sense in which a changing A is a changing A (for a time at least—no individual A persists forever). And that is precisely the sense in which the dialectical materialist affirms that A is A as part of his first law. But it is equally true that a *changing* A is a *changing* A, (and this process of change, as we noted, is not temporary, but continuous). Hence, the dialectical logician adds, A is also non-A (since it is clear that what A is continuously changing into is not more A, but non-A). Such a statement seems "contradictory," and indeed, it is "contradictory," especially from the point of view of formal logic. The very contention of the dialectical materialist is that what the laws of formal logic declare impossible, contradictory and unthinkable is what takes place during every instant. Such "contradictions" must be recognized as possible, as an organic aspect of existence, although, of course, it does not follow that anything that would appear to be "contradictory" from the standpoint of formal logic is actually existent.

How, after all, did it come to be laid down as a principle that "A is A and cannot be non-A"? The dialectical materialist would remind us that this is a man made formulation, the product of a certain phase (with its inevitable limitations) in the development of human knowledge. It seems axiomatic largely because we are taught to believe that it is. However, if a certain theory of logic is found to be incompatible with the actual nature of things, it seems clear to the dialectical materialist that this discrepancy casts doubt, not upon the nature of things, but upon the theory of logic concerned. In short, what good does it do to speak of a "Law of Identity" if nothing remains identical

with itself even during the briefest instant, or of a "Law of Non-Contradiction" when everything is a combination of opposing or contradictory elements, or of a "Law of Excluded Middle" when each thing, every instant is in process of passing through that middle ground which is both A and non-A, from which it was supposed to be forever excluded. Why should such "laws" be regarded as self evident truths? How could they possess the most fruitful relationship to the method of correct thinking?

THE GREATNESS OF ARISTOTLE

It is well to point out that the dialectical materialist raises these questions in relation to the present stage in the development of knowledge. He would emphasize that there was a time, in Aristotle's day, when the formal theory of logic represented exactly what was needed in relation to the level of development which science had then reached. After the primitive, vague and loosely generalized dialectics of pre-Socratic thinkers like Heracleitus and others, Aristotle's emphasis on precision, refinement and separation was a healthy tendency which, executed in terms of his encyclopedic grasp, constituted the greatest methodological synthesis ever achieved up to that point. The fault does not lie with Aristotle and what he contributed in relation to his own time. It lies rather with those who try to meet the very different situation of twenty-two centuries later with a structure of theory which, quite understandably, no longer carries the movement of science forward, as formerly, but lags behind it.

To make matters worse, what passes as "formal logic" today is not so much the work of Aristotle himself, as the medieval elaboration and interpretation of Aristotle by the Scholastics who, Lenin maintained, idolized all that was dead and killed all that was living in Aristotle's teachings. Alexandrov, a Soviet

philosopher of the present day, in his remarkable study of Aristotle, even goes so far as to say that ". . . Aristotle's logic, by virtue of its deep rooted connection with the scientific developments of his epoch and the whole process of knowledge, cannot be called formal logic in that sense in which the concept 'formal' is attached to bourgeois logic of modern times. Aristotle did not place the logical forms of investigation in any opposition to their concrete content. On the contrary, he tried to elicit the logical forms and connections from the basic characteristics of existence. It is this which explains the living depth of his analysis and the acuteness of the dialectical conception of problems . . ." [1]

While Aristotle's theory of logic, as he himself elaborated it in relation to what his period offered, thus contained dialectical elements and represented a necessary step to a future development of dialectical theory (a fact which Hegel, who paid high tribute to Aristotle, recognized), the Aristotelian formulation was clearly weighted on the side of a predominantly static metaphysical theory. This theory was one that identified reality primarily with abstract, unmoving form rather than with material, changing content. That is, the reality of a table, for example, did not lie in the dynamic physical content of the thing itself, so much as in the logical form of the idea of a table. This logical "form" is expressed in the proper definition of a table, which indicates what a table really is. The word "form" here is obviously not a synonym of shape; what is meant is suggested by our use of the verb "conform." The form or reality of a table, what really makes it a table (its "formal cause" in Aristotle's terminology) is the set of defining requirements to which it must *conform* in order to be a table. Thus it is hardly strange that a "formal" theory of logic should be developed by a philosopher who believed that reality was essentially "form."

[1] Alexandrov, G., *Aristotel*, p. 178. Sotsekgiz, Moscow, 1940. An abstract of this book appears in English in *Philosophic Abstracts*, No. 10.

WHAT IS DIALECTICAL THINKING?

If the foregoing discussion contains an answer to a question which we raised previously, we ought also, at this point, to try to redeem a claim which was made earlier. That is, the claim that the differences between the formal and dialectical theories of logic do not constitute a merely academic issue, but have important implications for our practical and everyday thinking. In other words, what does it mean, in terms of method, to think dialectically, as that term is used in Soviet philosophy, rather than formalistically? How does it work out in relation to concrete problems? What are the specific dangers and disadvantages of the formal theory in relation to correct thinking?

To think dialectically is to think in terms of movement, change, development, transformation, history, and hence, also in terms of interconnectedness. If the subject matter about which we are thinking is not static, the method which we use to think about it should be such as to prepare us for changes, to guide us to the essential situation which accounts for these changes, to make it easier for us to follow and even to anticipate the course of change. To think dialectically is to realize that the ultimately important thing about the subject matter with which we are concerned is not the "state" in which it appears to be at the moment, but the *direction* and *rate* of the changes which are taking place in it.

We recognize this principle perfectly well when we consider, for example, the significance of a given person's beliefs. We recognize, if we are realistic, that the fundamentally important thing is not the particular content of the particular beliefs which he holds at this particular moment. To understand the nature and significance of these beliefs, we cannot rest content merely with a *static analysis* of them. They must be gauged dynamically as well. We should first of all have to consider the individual holding the beliefs in terms of change and develop-

ment. That is to say, how old, in what period of life is he? Where is he, in what country or civilization, historical period or century? Then again, in what *direction* are his beliefs moving? If we would understand certain beliefs, it is not enough to know simply that they are what they are (although the Law of Identity, A is A, might encourage us to assume that such is the case); we must know where they came from and where they are going.

Let us examine a concrete instance which may illustrate the force and effect of these considerations. Suppose that someone were to say to you, I would like you to give me your judgment as to the nature and meaning of the beliefs held by a certain person on the subject of religious toleration, with special emphasis on their relationship to democracy. This person was of the opinion that Catholics, Jews, atheists, and agnostics should not be accorded legal toleration by the government, nor indeed should any irreligious or religious group except certain Christian Protestant sects, but that these Christian Protestant sects should tolerate one another. If you were asked, could such a person be called a strong advocate of religious toleration, or, could he be called a democrat, or, could he, by virtue of holding such beliefs, claim to be a great contributor to the growth and development of the democratic tradition, you probably would be inclined, under ordinary circumstances, to answer in the negative. There is little doubt that the vast majority of people, including the "highly educated" would feel that they had every right to answer in the negative on all counts. They probably would say that the person in question was some sort of fascist, or belonged to some such organization as the Ku Klux Klan, or was, in any case, strongly anti-democratic. Yet, as a matter of fact, they would be quite wrong on every count, and the reason would probably be that they were thinking of the problem statically (formalistically) rather than in terms of movement, development and history (dialectically). The underlying as-

sumptions in their method of approach probably were of this sort: democracy is democracy (A is A); democracy is not these beliefs (A is not non-A) and that is enough to settle the matter.

However, we see that it is not enough when we examine further, although the formalistic method itself would hardly encourage us to examine further. The person whose beliefs are in question is the philosopher John Locke, who lived in England in the seventeenth century. Actually, John Locke is a great democrat, one of the founders of the modern democratic tradition and one of the fathers of the very idea of religious toleration. He is correctly regarded in this way, not in spite of these beliefs that we have mentioned, but precisely (although not solely) because of them!

However, we can only understand this situation when we look at religious toleration, democracy and John Locke's beliefs dialectically, that is, historically, and in terms of interrelation with the surrounding context. When we do so, we are led to discover that in seventeenth century Europe, and indeed, generally speaking, for the whole preceding period of the Christian era in Europe, the prevailing system was one wherein the civil government made itself responsible for establishing and protecting in the state what was considered to be the right religion, and for protecting people from the dangers of the wrong religions. This was regarded as a very serious duty. Under the reasoning which prevailed, the wrong religions, for example, should be excluded from the community more rigorously than the plague, for after all, the plague threatens only our mortal bodies in this life, whereas incorrect beliefs on religious matters threaten our immortal souls in the life eternal.

Whoever, under these circumstances, advances and champions the belief that any religion besides the established one should be permitted in the community is a great champion of the idea of religious toleration. In a sense, he is a greater cham-

pion than any one who comes after him, and his early beliefs are of greater significance than later doctrines, because the early step was the most important. It signified the breaking of the ice, the challenge to the *principle* of intolerance. It was the most difficult step to take. Once the principle of toleration is accepted in any form, it becomes relatively easy to add each succeeding group to the number of those tolerated. Thus Locke is correctly regarded as a powerful democratic champion of religious toleration, although one would never be able to appreciate this fact, or even credit its existence, unless one approached the whole problem dialectically. Otherwise one might draw exactly the opposite conclusion and completely misunderstand the situation.

Let us consider the same illustration from another angle. Suppose someone were to come forward today and claim to be a democratic believer in religious toleration because he held the same views as John Locke, who is recognized as one of the most outstanding advocates of democratic principles in this field. We would certainly be forced to deny his claim. We should have to point out that the very same beliefs which at one time constituted a progressive democratic position have been transformed, by the movement of history, into a reactionary, undemocratic position. Or, rather, the context of social life has become so transformed that the "same" belief in relation to the new situation no longer has the same meaning and significance. In this case the change is so great that it makes for just about the opposite meaning and significance. If you would be a democrat in the twentieth century, you must go much further than Locke went in the seventeenth century. If you would be as good a democrat as Locke you must be as much ahead of your day as he was of his. To hold the identical beliefs of Locke in the sense of the Law of Identity (A is A and not non-A) would make you as anti-democratic as Locke was pro-democratic. It would put you as far behind your times as Locke was ahead of his.

sumptions in their method of approach probably were of this sort: democracy is democracy (A is A); democracy is not these beliefs (A is not non-A) and that is enough to settle the matter.

However, we see that it is not enough when we examine further, although the formalistic method itself would hardly encourage us to examine further. The person whose beliefs are in question is the philosopher John Locke, who lived in England in the seventeenth century. Actually, John Locke is a great democrat, one of the founders of the modern democratic tradition and one of the fathers of the very idea of religious toleration. He is correctly regarded in this way, not in spite of these beliefs that we have mentioned, but precisely (although not solely) because of them!

However, we can only understand this situation when we look at religious toleration, democracy and John Locke's beliefs dialectically, that is, historically, and in terms of interrelation with the surrounding context. When we do so, we are led to discover that in seventeenth century Europe, and indeed, generally speaking, for the whole preceding period of the Christian era in Europe, the prevailing system was one wherein the civil government made itself responsible for establishing and protecting in the state what was considered to be the right religion, and for protecting people from the dangers of the wrong religions. This was regarded as a very serious duty. Under the reasoning which prevailed, the wrong religions, for example, should be excluded from the community more rigorously than the plague, for after all, the plague threatens only our mortal bodies in this life, whereas incorrect beliefs on religious matters threaten our immortal souls in the life eternal.

Whoever, under these circumstances, advances and champions the belief that any religion besides the established one should be permitted in the community is a great champion of the idea of religious toleration. In a sense, he is a greater cham-

pion than any one who comes after him, and his early beliefs are of greater significance than later doctrines, because the early step was the most important. It signified the breaking of the ice, the challenge to the *principle* of intolerance. It was the most difficult step to take. Once the principle of toleration is accepted in any form, it becomes relatively easy to add each succeeding group to the number of those tolerated. Thus Locke is correctly regarded as a powerful democratic champion of religious toleration, although one would never be able to appreciate this fact, or even credit its existence, unless one approached the whole problem dialectically. Otherwise one might draw exactly the opposite conclusion and completely misunderstand the situation.

Let us consider the same illustration from another angle. Suppose someone were to come forward today and claim to be a democratic believer in religious toleration because he held the same views as John Locke, who is recognized as one of the most outstanding advocates of democratic principles in this field. We would certainly be forced to deny his claim. We should have to point out that the very same beliefs which at one time constituted a progressive democratic position have been transformed, by the movement of history, into a reactionary, undemocratic position. Or, rather, the context of social life has become so transformed that the "same" belief in relation to the new situation no longer has the same meaning and significance. In this case the change is so great that it makes for just about the opposite meaning and significance. If you would be a democrat in the twentieth century, you must go much further than Locke went in the seventeenth century. If you would be as good a democrat as Locke you must be as much ahead of your day as he was of his. To hold the identical beliefs of Locke in the sense of the Law of Identity (A is A and not non-A) would make you as anti-democratic as Locke was pro-democratic. It would put you as far behind your times as Locke was ahead of his.

This reasoning, in the view of the materialist dialectician,[1] applies, in greater or lesser measure (depending on the amount of change involved in the content of the problems dealt with) to all followers of earlier thinkers and schools. Can one be a genuine "Aristotelian," for example, merely by holding, in the twentieth century A.D. the identical doctrines which Aristotle held in the fourth century B.C.? Not if one expects to play the same role that Aristotle did; not if one expects his beliefs to have the same meaning and significance that Aristotle's had. It is clear that to identify oneself with the literal beliefs of another would be to identify oneself with their spirit, significance and meaning only if the context, both theoretical and practical, in relation to which they functioned, has remained the same. Soviet philosophers point out, for instance, that to be a Marxist in the fifth decade of the twentieth century is not merely to repeat what Marx said seventy-five or a hundred years ago. New conditions have arisen, in relation to which some of his beliefs are now no longer correct, and others must be considerably modified. Even Marx lived to say, on occasion, "*Je ne suis pas Marxiste.*" [2]

We have already seen how Marx's views on the path of development of capitalism and its political consequences were considerably modified by Lenin in the light of the phenomena of imperialism which Marx did not experience. Lenin elaborated the "law of uneven development of capitalism," one consequence of which was that he considered possible a victory of socialism in one country surrounded by capitalist states, a thesis which Marx had rejected. However, Lenin retained Marx's belief in the impossibility of effecting a transition from social-

[1] It may be noted, as regards terminology, that the Soviet philosopher uses the substantive *dialectics* when stressing his method, and the substantive *materialism* when speaking of his ontology. Thus he usually refers to himself as a "materialist dialectician" in logic, and as a "dialectical materialist" in world view.

[2] When certain of his "followers" insisted on clinging to earlier theses which he himself had been obliged to correct.

ism to communism except on a world wide scale. Stalin, in the light of later developments, has advanced the view that such a transition, in respect to most of the factors involved, is now possible in a single country.

This type of development of Marxian theory is distinguished from "revisionism" which has to do with the rejection of certain beliefs on grounds other than objective evidence. The *Kratkii filosofskii slovar* (*Brief Philosophic Dictionary*), under the entry, "Dogma, Dogmatism," says in part: "A judgment or theory which may be correct in itself, if taken undialectically, without regard to changing circumstances and concrete surrounding conditions, can become a dogma. It was in this sense that Marx and Engels constantly emphasized that 'our teaching is not a dogma, but a guide to action.' Lenin and Stalin decisively rejected the dogmatic vulgarization of Marxism which was undertaken by opportunists of all types. . . . Genuinely revolutionary Marxism is *creative* Marxism continually enriching, by means of new data, the theory of social development and the revolutionary practice of the masses." There is a popular method of criticizing Soviet thought which is capable of explaining away anything. So long as Marx's original position is adhered to, this method will make accusations of a blind persistence in rigid dogma. On the other hand, any modification of Marx's position will be cried down as ignoble and inconsistent abandonment of the classic founders.

It may well be claimed by formal logicians that there is nothing in their methodology which prevents them from accepting the results of historical change. They may protest that they, too, recognize that Locke was a democrat, and that a person advocating his beliefs today would not be a democrat. In this they may be right. But the point at issue is not whether they can accept and recognize the facts *after* these have been gathered and the conclusion *after* it has been established. The question is, rather, to what extent does their conception of right thinking

suggest the necessity of finding such facts in order to deal with the situation adequately, and lead the thinker to the strategic areas where they may be found. The dialectical logician holds that the formalistic methodology, by playing down the importance of change, movement, and transformation, does not encourage the attempt to think historically, but rather leads one to make the assumption that, since A is A and cannot be non-A, A can be adequately dealt with in its own terms, in and of itself. If X must be either A or non-A, we need not worry about its being both.

The dialectical thinker would point out that the discussion of social, economic and political problems as it is carried on all around us—in conversations, in the press, on the radio and from the platform presents us, unfortunately, with only too abundant a source of weaknesses and fallacies of the type we have been discussing. How often is the attempt made to settle an issue which has arisen out of contemporary conditions by citing the opinions or policies of some great and praiseworthy figure of the eighteenth century who seems to have thought about or dealt with the same thing, but who, in reality, as we see upon historical analysis (and can see only upon historical analysis), was addressing himself to an essentially different issue, arising out of essentially different conditions, although he used the same words and terms that we apply to the contemporary scene. How frequently the formalistic method of thinking permits the conservative to pass himself off as a liberal, or the reactionary antidemocrat as a progressive champion of democracy by advocating, in relation to changed conditions, the same views for which some persecuted radical of an earlier day risked his fortune and his very life.

For example, to champion economic *laissez faire* in the eighteenth century was the mark of radical, even revolutionary thinking. It was a doctrine connected with the militantly democratic circles which paved the way for and carried out the

American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789. It was opposed to established privilege and came distinctly from the left. Today, the actual situation is just about reversed. Generally speaking, *laissez faire*, or rugged individualism as it is sometimes called, emanates from the right, not the left; it is not a threat to, but rather a guarantee of established privilege; it could hardly be said to be identified with popular revolutionary forces, but is associated with some of the most conservative circles, which are inspired, not by the desire to go forward with changes into something new, but rather to change *back* to something that has already begun to give way.

Yet how plausibly its advocates sometimes argue, with the help of formalistic, non-historical categories, as if they, in the twentieth century, had the same relation to political problems as the founding fathers and the most militant heroes of democracy in the eighteenth century. This essentially erroneous, but apparently (formalistically) correct reasoning is the same as we have seen in the case of religious toleration which we examined previously: democracy is democracy (A is A), and since these beliefs equaled democracy in So and So's case, they equal democracy in my case. This would be correct reasoning, the dialectical logician points out, if we lived in a universe which was essentially static. In that case the form of the thinking would alone settle the whole matter. But we live in a universe of continuous change, which means that the actual content of problems does not remain within the bounds of static forms, but is continually *trans*forming itself. Such a universe, in his view, demands a logic, not of *forms*, but of *transformations*.

It does not follow, of course, that any identification with something in the past will be erroneous. It all depends on the amount and nature of the changes that have taken place in respect to the specific subject matter under discussion. Some areas of subject matter may still exhibit essentially the same content in relation to certain problems that they did centuries or

even scores of centuries ago, whereas in other cases the passing of every day or hour may bring changes so decisive that they can only be described as a transformation. For example, the orbit of the moon in relation to the earth or the function of the heart in the human body is in all probability essentially the same today as it was tens of thousands of years ago, although, of course, these things did not always exist throughout the past, nor, in all probability, will they remain essentially static for an eternal future. But it is not simply a matter of the *field* as such: it is clear enough that certain conclusions in astronomy or biology are subject to momentary variation in the most essential particulars, such as the position of the moon in relation to the earth, or the rate of blood pulsation in a given individual, whereas certain relationships in the field of social phenomena may not suffer root changes for thousands of years. While certain areas of subject matter will in general exhibit more rapid rates of change than others, everything depends upon concrete examination, because the significance of the changes involved is not only a function of the subject matter as such, but of the specific problems raised in relation to specific aspects of it. What the Soviet dialectician stresses is that the dimension of change cannot be neglected with impunity. It must always be seriously considered in relation to the problem in hand, although it will not always turn out to be of decisive significance.

It is not only in popular or semi-popular discussions of social problems, but also in the most serious, technical and official consideration that the dialectical logician would find many an instance of the limiting effects of formalistic methods. For example, the history of labor legislation shows how astonishing can be the consequences of taking such a concept as freedom of economic contract unhistorically and in isolation from actual surrounding conditions. What would seem simpler, as an application of the democratic idea to the working conditions of vast masses of people, than to pass legislation necessitating the instal-

lation of hygienic safeguards and facilities and to restrict hours and types of labor so as to protect the health and child-bearing possibilities of women, or the normal health and growth of children? Yet time and again legislation of this type has been declared unconstitutional on the ground that it violates the democratic principle of liberty of contract—that is, the right of the individual to work under such conditions if he so wishes!

The idea that the state should not interfere with the bargaining relations among individuals did indeed serve the ends of democracy when the state, as it then existed, was protecting the privileged position of the feudal economic system, with all its restrictions, patents and monopolies, a system which was no longer capable of adequately serving society, and was consequently obstructing the development of a newly emerging economic system, the capitalist, which was better fitted to meet the needs and demands of the time. In the early stages of capitalism one might have pointed to an abundance of more or less readily available unexplored fields and a more or less rough equality of bargaining power as a justification for the non-intervention of the state. But as capitalism developed, a very different situation emerged, in which liberty of contract, interpreted as non-intervention by the state, no longer served the welfare of the people. However, the courts, in so many cases, did not reason historically, but rather in the fashion encouraged and sanctioned by formal logic. The idea of liberty of contract was not approached in terms of developing content, but was understood as if it were a static form which would be eternally what it was in the eighteenth century, and would always have the same relation to our underlying problems.

There can be little doubt that what we call "legalistic" reasoning in its invidious sense reflects the influence of a theory of logic which stresses form rather than content. Mention might be made here of one further example, drawn from the sphere

of race relations. In the famous Plessy case [3] the Supreme Court of the United States decided that the segregation of Negroes in separate railway carriages was not a violation of their rights. The court reasoned that such segregation was not an imputation of inferiority because if the Negroes were segregated from the whites, it followed that the whites were equally segregated from the Negroes. Thus the idea of segregation was taken in its purely formal aspect, in isolation from all the actual content of the situation. As a formal principle it is correct enough that the mutual segregation of A and B does not in itself impute inferiority either to A or B. But if we are to deal adequately with any concrete instance of segregation, we must recognize a dialectical principle which transcends the formal one—namely, that the meaning and significance of any idea, such as segregation, is not an eternally static one, but is one which is subject to movement and change in relation to changing surrounding conditions, although a (shifting) continuity of common features may also be traced.

MATERIALIST DIALECTICS AND SCIENCE

The reader will notice that all the illustrations chosen involve what may be called a liberal or radical political and social orientation. This is not an accident. There can be no doubt that dialectical materialists, beginning with Marx and Engels, were motivated to develop the implications of the dialectical point of view in logic, which they inherited from Hegel, because of what it revealed to them in regard to problems of social change. However, it will be recognized that this circumstance, of itself, need not be taken as an adverse reflection upon the validity of their method, nor upon its universality so long as there is evidence to support its claims in wider fields.

[3] *Cf.* Lawrence B. Evans, *Cases in American Constitutional Law*. Third ed. by Archibald H. Throckmorton, Callaghan, Chicago, 1933.

Some of this evidence we have already examined in our foregoing discussion, extending, indeed, to the widest field of all, namely, ontology. We may also note that in their actual use and application of the dialetical method, Marx and Engels, as well as subsequent dialectical materialists, by no means confined themselves to popular or semi-popular discussions of social and political problems. Such a technical and elaborate piece of research in the field of economics and sociology as Marx's three volume work on "Capital" is an example of the conscious use of the dialectical method.[1] In this treatise Marx examines the capitalist system in thoroughgoing historical fashion, in terms of where it came from and where it is going, the nature of the forces that move within it, and how their interplay accounts for its evolution. This dialectical examination, as we might expect from our preceding discussion, includes the element of analysis as well as that of history. The structure of the capitalist system, its elements, forms and relationships are minutely analyzed. But the aim is, of course, historical analysis, to bring the analysis in relation to the history, to see and depict the forms, but always in relation to their actual movement and development.

There is probably nothing which will contribute more to an understanding of basic social developments in the U.S.S.R. than a grasp of the dialectical method; and there is certainly nothing which has contributed more to the misunderstanding of Soviet problems than the neglect and ignorance of this method. Fundamental to all the planning operations of Soviet society is not only a set of ethical values and social objectives, but a method of approach which stresses historical dynamics, which sees specific problems in the perspective of a given phase of social development, and attempts to deal with each one in the light of changing historical circumstances.

[1] For an analysis of Marx's work from this point of view see. Somerville, *Methodology in Social Science: A Critique of Marx and Engels.*

It is this combination of well defined goals and historically flexible methods which has apparently baffled the comprehension of so many commentators on Soviet issues. To them, every change of Soviet policy seems to be either an abandonment of objectives, or an unprincipled opportunistic veering incompatible with serious planning. Apparently, they are unable to conceive of a method which stabilizes itself by working out laws of change, which takes change so seriously that, to speak paradoxically, it even prepares itself for unexpected changes. This is not to maintain that Soviet policies are always correct or successful. Such a thesis, in the judgment of the present writer, would be contrary to historical evidence. What is true, however, is that Soviet policies, whether successful or not, will never be understood (they may be liked or disliked—that is a different matter) unless the conditions of dialectical thinking are taken into account. If we can speak of such a thing as the Soviet mind, the first thing we must recognize is that this mind thinks dialectically, and that it is often a case of, *plus ça change, plus ça reste la même chose.*[2]

Significant in this regard are the following remarks of Stalin on certain basic issues in 1930:

"It may seem strange that we who are in favor of *amalgamating* the future of national cultures into one common culture, (common in form and content), having one common tongue, are at the same time in favor of causing the national cultures to flourish at the present time, in the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But there is nothing strange in this. We must let the national cultures develop and expand and reveal all their potential qualities, in order to create the necessary conditions for merging them into one common culture with one common tongue . . . in this lies the dialectical quality of the Leninist way of treating the question of national culture.

[2] It may be noted that in this case, the converse is also true: *plus ça reste la même chose, plus ça change*

"It may be said that such a way of approaching the question is 'contradictory.' But is there not the same 'contradiction' in our treatment of the question of the state? We are in favor of the state dying out, and at the same time we stand for the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat. . . . The highest possible development of the power of the state, with the object of preparing the conditions for the dying out of the state: that is the Marxist formula. Is it 'contradictory'? Yes, it is 'contradictory.' But this contradiction is a living thing, and completely reflects Marxist dialectics.

"Or, for example, take Lenin's attitude towards the right of nations to self-determination, including separation. Lenin sometimes expressed the principle of national self-determination in a simple formula: 'Separation for amalgamation.' Just think—separation for amalgamation. It smacks even of the paradoxical." [3]

Stalin's reference in the last passage is to the voluntary amalgamation of nations into a federation of socialist republics. It is interesting to note that certain of these policies on which he commented so bluntly in 1930 are among the very ones which have been repeatedly "discovered" in the last few years, and pictured as an inexplicable betrayal of the foundations of Marxism, or as a shift because of the war. It might be well to emphasize that Stalin's method does not imply that all "contradictory" policies are sound. The judge of the soundness of policies is the movement of events, and the consequences brought about by them, in terms of their contribution to the basic objectives we have discussed. The point is, that this very *movement* of events frequently brings about situations and necessitates policies which appear to be "contradictory," and are contradictory from the standpoint of a logic which expresses the conditions of static form rather than moving content.

[3] *Leninism*, Vol. II, p. 342. Moscow, 1933. Report to the Sixteenth Party Congress, 1930.

Our examples so far have been drawn largely from social fields. In relation to natural science, there are many senses in which it is claimed that dialectical methodology is more efficacious than the methodology associated with formal logic. First of all, we face here again the question of fidelity to fact. If the universe is indeed essentially dynamic, any science which uses a method of thought, stressing the static and the self-identical is, to say the least, making its work unnecessarily difficult. Although a great deal of work is done, the rate of progress is probably retarded. Is it beyond the bounds of probability that the theory of organic evolution might have taken hold much sooner if the conceptions of right thinking associated with formal logic had not loaded the scientific dice against the notion of basic species being in process of transformation? Where logical species are regarded as immutable, it becomes "natural" to think of biological species in the same way.

At any rate, the Soviet thinker holds the view that a methodology which explicitly directs attention to the changing and evolving will make it easier, in the long run, to discover basic truths about a universe pervasively characterized by change and evolution. There would probably be little disagreement if one were to point to the Copernican theory of astronomy, the Newtonian theory of universal gravitation, the theory of organic evolution and the electronic theory of matter as among the greatest triumphs of modern science. While each of these theories finally overcame static conceptions and replaced them with dynamic ones, it is equally true that each of them had to wage a bitter and protracted struggle (not always bloodless), not only against the older doctrines which they supplanted, but against the old methods of thinking in general. They all seemed so "unnatural" in a universe which was supposed to be essentially static! While these theories themselves have been and are being modified, it is in the direction of an ever more dynamic picture.

Moreover, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that scientists themselves, and, even, to a certain extent, some of the very authors of these theories, failed to see the fullness of the dynamic outlines which such discoveries were so inexorably tracing. Thus Copernicus still clung to the notion of "fixed" stars, while Newton relied upon a "first impulse" to start his universally gravitating system in motion. A telling instance of the persistence of this essentially static view of the universe is given by Engels, whose works, *Anti-Duhring* and *Dialectics of Nature*, are of exceptional significance in regard to the dialectical analysis of methodology in natural science.

"How tenaciously even in 1861," he writes, "this view could be held by a man [Madler, the German astronomer] whose scientific achievements had provided highly important material for abolishing it is shown by the following classic words:

" 'All the arrangements of our solar system, so far as we are capable of comprehending them, aim at preservation of what exists and at unchanging continuance. Just as since the most ancient times no animal and no plant on the earth has become more perfect or in any way different, just as we find in all organisms only stages *alongside* of one another and not following from one another, just as our own race has always remained the same in corporeal respects—so even the greatest diversity in the co-existing heavenly bodies does not justify us in assuming that these forms are merely different stages of development; it is rather that everything created is equally perfect in itself.' (Mädler, *Popular Astronomy*, Berlin 1861, 5th ed., p. 316.)" [4]

It is evident from the course of our previous discussion that the dialectical materialist is concerned to establish the closest relationship to science. He feels that his dialectical methodology, as developed so far, offers the basis of a far more satisfactory conception of the scientific method than does the

[4] *Dialectics of Nature*, p 8.

formal theory of logic. He feels that his principles express with greater fidelity the basic conditions of the universe which science has actually disclosed, and the basic methodological directives which must actually be followed for the discovery of fundamental truths in this sort of universe. He recognizes that many people have made great contributions to science who were never acquainted with any formulation of the theory of dialectical methodology, and some, even, who have heard of this theory, and in their expressed philosophy have professed the greatest hostility towards it. This is by no means an unusual situation, although some commentators appear to maintain that it constitutes a decisive disproof of the claims of the theory in question. It is clear upon reflection, however, that any theory of scientific method formulated at any period subsequent to the origin of science, and which does not command unanimous agreement among those scientists who have heard of it (and neither of these conditions is met by any theory of scientific method which has ever been formulated) is bound to be in the same situation.

It might be emphasized that the actual operations of science, like correct thinking itself (of which they are, indeed, a complex example), are one thing, and that a theory of method which attempts to explain the nature and basis of these operations is quite another thing. This methodological theory bears the same relation to the structure of scientific operations which it is attempting to explain as the scientific work itself bears to the particular subject matter which *it* is attempting to explain. It is no more unusual to find scientists who perform their own scientific operations very well but who at the same time are poor at methodological *analysis*, than it is to find a great literary stylist who is poor at the technical analysis of style—perhaps even of his own style. It is possible that such a stylist, if he is not well trained and competent in the field of esthetic analysis (which is a very different thing from literary creation), might

mistakenly reject what is technically the best analysis of his own style. At any rate, what the dialetical materialist maintains is that an adequate knowledge of the principles of dialectical methodology will improve any scientist's understanding of the basis and implications of his scientific work, and hence improve the work itself.

SPECIALIZATION AND INTEGRATION

One important instance of this claim may be seen in the situation which confronts us in regard to specialization. Dialectical methodology, as we have seen, emphasizes the interconnectedness of things, whereas formalistic methodology emphasizes the notion of static self-identities. Now if the universe is actually a scene of pervasive dynamic inter-connectedness, it seems reasonable to presume that the pursuit of scientific truth will be much more successful in the long run if it takes place within specialities which accept the obligation to work out their relationship to other specialities and thus to a total scientific perspective than if it takes place within specialities which eschew any such obligation, and become proud of their divorcement from and even ignorance of other fields. This is first of all a question, not of accepting some obligation over and above the demands of science, but of the proper fulfillment of the scientific task. It seems unlikely that we will ever adequately understand a universe that is interconnected in all of its parts by approaching it through "independent" specialities developed apart from the needs of a total integration. It need hardly be pointed out that such specialities do not automatically combine into an adequate picture of the interdependent whole, any more than several dozens of photographs of a single building, for example, would form an adequate picture of the total building unless they were taken from the viewpoint of a common perspective, and with due regard for the way in which certain

basic features joined the several parts. In the earliest period of modern science, a thinker like Francis Bacon realized this truth, and never tired of emphasizing the need for *organizing* the pursuit of science within an integrated framework which would make of the various specialities genuinely cooperative parts of an organic whole.

Nowadays it might be said that the predominant feeling among scientists in our culture is that all this smacks too much of "philosophy," which in the opinion of some, has no necessary or vital relationship to the actual operations of science. Such an attitude is a curious one, historically speaking, for it is only in recent generations that science and scientists have been at any pains to disassociate themselves from philosophy, or even to draw a distinction in principle. So many of the figures of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who are called scientists today—people like Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo and Newton—not to mention thinkers who made very important contributions in the ancient world and the Middle Ages, called themselves philosophers and referred to their work as philosophy. Nor was this merely a matter of terminology. It meant that while they were specialists, they were at the same time conscious that no specialization was intellectually adequate unless it was a part of a total philosophic integration.

At the same time one can understand the frame of mind of present day scientists, who are by no means solely to blame for the dubious situation in which they find themselves. So much of what passes as philosophy in the contemporary world has itself lost, if not its sense of obligation, at least the vital and realistic connection with actuality which the scientific temper demands. Many a scientist may indeed feel that if he is confronted with a choice between an irresponsible and unrealistic preoccupation with some grandiose but largely verbalistic conception of a capital-R Reality, and an unavoidably responsible

grappling with some fragment which is at least full of indubitable actuality, he feels justified in choosing the latter. To make matters worse, not a little of the philosophy with which the scientist may come into contact in the contemporary world has, so to say, an unfriendly attitude towards science—in some cases lofty and indifferent; in others, rather bitterly hostile. If the scientist considered this situation historically, he would not find it surprising, since a good deal of this philosophy represents the continuation of certain trends against which his own philosophic-scientific forebears had to struggle in setting up the type of thought which has since come to be called scientific. But unfortunately, the scientist, in so many cases, is not disposed to think historically, and he thus becomes contemptuous of all philosophy, failing to distinguish friend from foe.

The dialectical materialist sees a distinct connection between the uncoordinated specialization, the lack of integrated planning which characterizes science under capitalist conditions, and similar characteristics of the general social and economic structure of which this science is a part. To him it seems quite natural that if the political and economic systems are still largely dominated by the spirit of *laissez faire* and "rugged individualism," the cultural system can hardly help being influenced in a similar direction. The general patterns of higher and professional study and research in scientific fields cannot help but be geared, in the main, to the patterns of industrial production, which, under the individualistic competition of capitalism, are not subject to over-all planning. Science, technology and industrial production are so closely interconnected in the modern world that any genuine integration of science presupposes the integration of industry.

This proposition extends itself to social fields as well as to natural science. Social integration is indivisible. It would be unrealistic to expect the social sciences, if *they* are expected to

be realistic, to meet a responsibility which the operating political system will not sanction, which is precisely the responsibility for integrating the social structure. At the present stage of social development this kind of integration is even theoretically impossible (if there is to be any vital connection between theory and practice) except as a creative enterprise of common planning as between social science and practical politics, wherein there is mutual confidence and a deep sense of common dedication.

The same point holds true of the educational structure, including the fine arts and their enormously influential "popular" counterparts. We may learn from the recent war, if from nothing else, that serious politics is always connected with a philosophy of life. A political party, if it is anything, is the implementation, the application to actuality of a social philosophy. Where there are really many parties, the dialectical materialist reasons, there are many philosophies, and no one of them will find itself in a position to exercise full responsibility for the dynamic integration of a complex social system. This point applies as much to the philosophy of democracy as to any other philosophy, unless, indeed, democracy is to be inherently identified with lack of integration, or is thought of as the automatic result of letting things alone. However, the actual attainment of democracy, in the view of the dialectical materialist, is not easier, but probably more difficult than that of many other philosophies, and requires, if anything, more forethought and planning.

Under socialism, planning, both economic and cultural, is, of course, very widespread. A consequent integration of science becomes possible, and is facilitated by the fact that a philosophy holds sway which seeks close and vital rapport with science on the one hand and the single political party on the other, a rapport which is sought quite as much by these other elements. It is recognized, at the same time, that socialism has no monopoly on planning. Fascism and Nazism, explicitly acknowledging

anti-democratic ends, could also plan and integrate in their own fashion. The choice is not simply between planning or not planning, but is also a matter of what is planned for.

DIALECTICAL RULES FOR THINKING

What concrete rules for correct thinking follow from the nature of the dialectical method? Some of its basic directives might be stated as follows:

1. Do not assume that the subject matter of any problem can be handled as if it were static until concrete examination has established that the rate and volume of changes involved are insignificant in relation to the specific nature of the problem.

2. In relation to any concrete subject matter, raise the questions: where has it come from and where is it going; what were the circumstances of its origin, and what are the rate and direction of the changes taking place in it? In other words, consider the subject matter in terms of its evolutionary path of development, and try to see it in relation to what it was and what it is likely to become. This attempt will promote understanding, facilitate prediction and forestall surprises.

3. In order to understand the evolutionary path of development of any subject matter, try to locate within it the interpenetrating, contending, opposing elements and forces which it probably contains. Investigate as closely and concretely as possible the nature of the conflict of forces involved, gauge the direction in which the several basic elements tend to move, determine which are stronger and which are weaker, and thus discover why their conflict is resolved in the way it is at present resolved, and how it is likely to be resolved in the future. In this connection, keep in mind that "The dialectical method regards as important primarily not that which at the given moment seems to be durable and yet is already beginning to

die away, but that which is arising and developing, even though at the given moment it may appear to be not durable . . ." [1]

4. Be prepared, not only for quantitative, but also for qualitative changes in your subject matter. Remember that in the past quantitative changes have always led to a qualitative change, and that a qualitative change has never come about, so far as we know, except as the result of the gradual accumulation of quantitative changes. In other words, ". . . dialectics does not regard the process of development as a simple process of growth, where quantitative changes do not lead to qualitative changes, but as a development which passes from insignificant and imperceptible quantitative changes to open fundamental changes, to qualitative changes; a development in which the qualitative changes occur not gradually, but rapidly and abruptly, taking the form of a leap from one state to another; they occur not accidentally but as the natural result of an accumulation of imperceptible and gradual quantitative changes." [2]

5. The movement change and development which observation has shown to pervade things make of them an interconnected complex. Therefore follow out the interconnections of the subject matter in hand, even when it appears to be static or isolated.

6. In relation to doctrines, schools of thought, historical trends and periods, social policies and the like, remember that the meaning and significance of any statement, program, work or field of work can only be understood in relation to the concrete conditions of time, place and circumstance involved. It is not only a matter of what is said, but of who says it and when.

[1] Stalin, *On Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, p 8 International, New York, 1940. This is the same methodological principle that John Dewey had in mind, although he was probably not thinking explicitly in terms of materialist dialectics, when he remarked, in *Reconstruction in Philosophy* that "The bad man is the man who no matter how good he *has been*, is beginning to deteriorate, to grow less good. The good man is the man who no matter how morally unworthy he *has* been is moving to become better." (P. 176 Italics of original.)

[2] Stalin. *Op. cit.*

Such are a few of the precepts or directives which the dialectical method, taken in its general form, suggests to the investigator. More specific precepts would, of course, be offered in relation to specific fields, in accordance with the concrete conditions actually present. Thus in social fields, for example, in so far as the evidence has shown that the underlying evolutionary dynamic is a struggle of classes centering around relation to the means of life, and hence, ways of living, it suggests to the investigator the advisability of seeking and exploring the relations between the problems in which he is interested and this underlying dynamic, which will, of course, if it exists at all, be found to condition his problems in a significant way.

It may be well to re-emphasize in passing that the dialectical materialist does not believe in a class struggle in society because that is what would be abstractly deducible from the general principles of dialectics, but rather that the general principles of dialectics receive further validation from the class struggle which is found to exist, and which, indeed, may well have originally suggested the existence of the wider principle. Apparently many critics and commentators are puzzled or even baffled by this combination of the most inclusive generalization or synthesis and the most decided rejection of *a priori* claims. Probably the reason is, first, that the kind of materialism with which they are most familiar is an atomistic mechanism suspicious of theory, and second, that they tend to associate a receptivity to synthesis and generalization with idealistic schools. Yet there is the example of a thinker like Francis Bacon, who pointed out that what he wanted to attain in his work was a "true and lawful marriage between the empirical and rational faculty, the unkind and ill-starred divorce and separation of which has thrown into confusion all the affairs of the human family." [3] This is very like the temper of thought of the dialectical materialist.

[3] *The Great Instauration*, Preface.

To put the matter in terms of induction and deduction, we are evidently dealing with a school which sees the vital necessity of both these aspects of thought, and which seeks to combine them in what it considers the most fruitful relationship. The position taken is that the nature of deduction cannot be properly understood or its role properly appreciated unless it is seen in terms of its organic relationship to the objective conditions of nature. By the same token, induction cannot be properly understood and utilized except in terms of the closest sympathy with and the fullest inclusion of deductive procedures.

The dialectical materialist does not claim to possess a complete and finished structure of logical theory. This structure is in process of being created. However, he does feel, as we have seen, that he possesses a firm foundation and a satisfactory orientation in the light of the stage of development reached by modern knowledge. He feels that this attitude in no way detracts from Aristotle's work, the greatness of which he recognizes, but which he sees in relation to a different set of historical and intellectual conditions. True to his fundamental outlook, he construes the situation not as a timeless competition between systems, but as a natural (which does not mean forever gradual) process of change and development whereby the old undergoes qualitative reconstruction.

CHAPTER VII

PIVOTAL CONTROVERSIES IN THE HISTORY OF SOVIET PHILOSOPHY

The two major events which define the path that Soviet philosophy has taken since the Revolution are the successive controversies surrounding the issues of mechanism and idealism. These controversies are, without doubt, the decisive moments in its historical development so far, and give the basic frame of reference within which work proceeds at the present time in the field of philosophy in the U.S.S.R.

REJECTION OF MECHANISTIC MATERIALISM

The first of these controversies is usually referred to as a dispute between mechanistic and dialectical materialists. Beginning as a discussion within the philosophy of science, it eventually spread to every phase of philosophy, and, in point of time, extended from the early twenties to 1929.

The theme of the discussion was the nature of that materialism which, in name, bound together all the philosophers within the Soviet school. The issue that actually divided them into two groups was whether or not a mechanistic conception of materialism was acceptable. A significant insight into the nature of the "mechanism" under discussion may be gained from the fact that most of those supporting that viewpoint were either directly engaged with some part or other of the field of the natural sciences, or were philosophers who, by training or

predilection were closely associated with those sciences. A leading figure among them was A. K. Timiriazev, son of the famous physiologist of tsarist times. Prominent also were figures like Timianski, Axelrod, and Stepanov.

Their temper of thought might be characterized as an extreme empiricism. The word "extreme" here would have reference not only to a total exclusion of opposing philosophic tendencies, but also to a certain "untheoretical," literal minded quality which attached to their conceptions and methods. They felt that while "dialectics" was in all respects a valid and basic philosophic concept, it should limit itself very closely and severely to the observed and discovered facts of science. It should follow science rather than lead it. "Materialism" to them meant a thorough reliance upon the methods and findings of experimental and exact natural science, which alone, in their view, was capable of coming to close grips with "matter" in its various phases. They did not hesitate to refer to themselves as "mechanists," and to advocate the mechanistic terminology, not only in the philosophy of nature, but in the philosophy of history and society as well.

Bukharin, for instance, wrote in 1922:

"It is quite possible to transcribe the 'mystical' (as Marx put it) language of Hegelian dialectics into the language of modern mechanics. Not so long ago, almost all Marxians objected to the mechanical terminology, owing to the persistence of the ancient conception of the atom as a detached, isolated particle. But now that we have the electron theory, which represents atoms as complete solar systems, we have no reason to shun this mechanical terminology. The most advanced tendencies of scientific thought in all fields accept this point of view." [1]

Bukharin, however, was in something of a special position, as we shall see. While his work was not fully acceptable to the mechanists, he was attacked also by their opponents, who

[1] *Historical Materialism*, p. 75. International, New York.

rejected his line of reasoning on two counts: first, that it was precisely these changes which the physical theories of matter were undergoing that called for a change from mechanistic terminology to a different terminology, and second, that his fondness for the mechanistic terms actually went much further than language.

Precisely what the mechanist group asserted was that the dialectical conception of nature, properly understood, was the mechanistic conception. Thus Stepanov flatly entitled one of his articles, "The Dialectical Understanding of Nature Is the Mechanistic Understanding." [2] This outlook commanded, in the beginning, a very large following. In fact, it was possible for Stepanov to write, in 1925, that there were manifest "in Marxism two opposing tendencies. On my side (the mechanist) appears the overwhelming majority . . . On the other side there is as yet but a very small number." [3]

It is interesting to remark Stepanov's formulation of the nature of the dispute. It is, he says, "a struggle between two irreconcilable points of view. From one of these dialectics is a method which should be used for knowledge of nature and society, inasmuch as the use of it leads to fruitful results. From the other point of view, all the fundamental relationships of the real world are given in advance in the ready-made conditions laid down in the dialectical philosophy of Hegel. The study of actually existing things can at the very most afford only additional verification of what are essentially *a priori* assertions." [4]

While it is possible to accept such a characterization of the controversy only with certain reservations (since Stepanov himself was one of the chief controversialists), it is nevertheless highly significant as an indication of how the mechanists looked upon the whole thing. To them it seemed to be a choice,

[2] In *Pod znamenem marxisma* (*Under the Banner of Marxism*), No. 3, 1925.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*

broadly speaking, between Hegelian philosophy and experimental science, under which circumstances they unhesitatingly chose experimental science.

However, as we might expect, Stepanov's formulation of the issue was not altogether acceptable to the other side. Luppol, for instance, takes Stepanov to task for talking as if the dialectical philosophy in question were nothing but pure Hegelianism. Stepanov's strictures do not apply, says Luppol, to the Hegelian dialectics as reconstructed by Marx and Engels, because that reconstruction was effected on a materialistic basis; that is, the idealistic commitments of Hegel were scrapped. So taken, he urges, we have a conception of dialectics which is not in opposition to natural science, but which explains and enriches science. Is it not a fact, he asks, that dialectics *does* reflect the natural world? These so-called ready-made conditions, he says, *are* found in *nature*. He also notes that ". . . it is on our side (and not on that of Stepanov and his adherents) that we find the published notes of Lenin on 'The Problem of Dialectic.' " [5] In like manner he cites the recent (1925) publication of Engels' *Natur-Dialektik*, and, after quoting from it, says: "If Comrade Stepanov goes further along the path of the positivistic evolutionists, then we will go further with Friedrich Engels." [6]

Stepanov was quite correct in noting that the mechanists comprised a group mainly made up of those "whose specialties fell within different branches of natural science (physics, chemistry, biology)," while on the other side were those "whose speciality was philosophy, and, for the most part, the philosophy of Hegel." [7] This opposing group apparently felt that mechanistic materialism was in real danger of giving up its philosophic birthright for a mess of science. They were led by Deborin, a man who had been associated with Plekhanov, and

[5] *Na dva fronta* (*On Two Fronts*), p. 185.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 187.
[7] *Op cit.*

who was well known for his work in the history of philosophy. They attacked the mechanist group on the ground that the latter's whole conception of materialism was narrow, rigid, lifeless. The mechanists, they felt, had only the most literal minded conception of dialectics as the sum of the results of the sciences, whereas dialectics, properly taken, was not only a sum, but a synthesis of the sciences, and not only *a* synthesis, but such a synthesis as would serve to indicate new paths of development and would rise to the level of an instrument of prediction. As Luppol put it, "The results change, but the dialectic remains the same." [8]

What lent increasing strength to the attacks of Deborin and his group was the fact that with every year, one might say with every month, the position of traditional, mechanistic science, the natural science of absolute categories, of hard and fast determinism, of rock-ribbed certainty with respect to the status of the atom, was growing weaker and weaker. Einsteinian relativity, the quantum theories, Heisenbergian indeterminacy, took their heavy toll. Under these circumstances, it seemed to the Deborin group to be nothing short of foolhardy to cast in their philosophic lot with mechanistic science. Even as science, let alone as philosophy, mechanism seemed to be going by the board. Moreover, the biological sciences also showed signs of similar breakdowns of traditional categories in the widespread reconstruction of evolutionary theories. It seemed only too plain that "the results change." As to whatever "remained the same," was it not precisely the function of philosophy to make clear just what it was? Thus Deborin and his supporters felt themselves to be rescuing philosophy from a school of thought which would have allowed her to perish of neglect in the interest of a positivistic science which, after all, seemed to be mistaken in its positivism.

[8] *Puti razvitiia filosofskoi mysli v S.S.S.R.* (*Trends in the Development of Philosophic Thought in the U.S.S.R.*) *Op. cit*, p. 188.

In arguing in such a fashion, the anti-mechanists (who regarded themselves as the only genuine dialecticians) were not altogether setting up men of straw. The mechanists had gone so far as to advocate, for instance, that the study of the history of philosophy be scrapped in higher institutions, and be replaced by a study of the history of science, or at most, that the history of philosophy be treated simply as one element in the history of science.

Just as the mechanists were prone to "play down" the study of the history of philosophy as such, they were inclined to belittle the role of classic philosophers in relation to the development of dialectical materialism. These tendencies came out with particular clarity in the voluminous discussions centering around Hegel and Spinoza. As we have already had occasion to observe in the case of Stepanov, the mechanists were inclined to treat Hegel with suspicion, to say the least. Grand flights of dialectics were not to their taste. They saw no reason to venerate the Hegelian categories. In fact, they probably would have been glad to forget all about Hegel. But they were not permitted to do so. Hegel became an issue. The "dialecticians" accused the mechanists of failure to comprehend the significance of the fact that Marx and Engels had built on Hegel, had profited immensely from the study of Hegel, and had advised everyone to do likewise. The mechanists, in turn, accused the Deborin group of failing to make any distinction between the Marxian method and Hegelian dialectics.

In the discussion centering around Spinoza, the main question concerned the significance of his work for the philosophic constructions of dialectical materialism. The mechanists—in particular, writers like Axelrod and Timianski—were disposed to make short shrift of the matter by declaring Spinoza an outright idealist. Deborin and his group, however, were inclined to see great value in Spinoza, both as a dialectician and as a materialist. Properly taken, they argued, that is, taken in the light of his

historical movement and direction, Spinoza belonged to materialism. They were ready to hearken back to Plekhanov's conception that dialectical materialism could be characterized as a certain form of Spinozism.

THE POSITION OF BUKHARIN

It was not only in the philosophy of nature and natural science, and in the history of philosophy, that the controversy was carried on. It also extended to the philosophy of society and history. Here, as we have already seen, Bukharin came out openly in favor of certain aspects of mechanism in his book, *Historical Materialism*, considered at that time (1922) a leading work on Marxist sociology, at least in the sense of a systematic text on the subject. Although Bukharin's explicit avowal of preference was for the terminology of mechanism, his opponents attacked not only his nomenclature, but his basic conceptions and theories, particularly the doctrine of social equilibrium, as being mechanistic. The concept of equilibrium, they felt, should not be central in the study of society; it was not the thing to emphasize. It was not faithful to the dialectical movement of society. Great weight was attached to Lenin's judgment, that Bukharin "never understood dialectics."

The situation of the Bukharinist school of thought was rendered more difficult by the fact that members of the mechanist group itself (who, as we have seen, were by no means disposed to surrender the title of dialectician) attacked Bukharin's work as not being a product of the dialectical method as they understood it. Sarabianov, for instance, very shortly after *Historical Materialism* appeared, accused Bukharin of adherence to pure formalism instead of genuine dialectics, in his logical and methodological outlook. "Comrade Bukharin is not a dialectician," he says, "but the most orthodox adherent of formal logic."[1]

[1] *Pod znamenem marxizma*, No. 3, 1922, p. 63.

He goes on to say that Bukharin does not treat dialectics as a living instrument, but only pays it respect as a "relic."

In 1929 the controversy came to a head. The immediate occasion of the crystallizing of the long debated views was the meeting in April of the Second All-Union Conference of Marxist-Leninist Scientific Institutions. This was a gathering made up of delegates (229 in number) from all the important scientific institutions of the country. All the leading figures were present and took part in the debates. Sarabianov, Timiriazev, Variash, and many others spoke in defense of mechanism. Deborin, Luppol, Karev, Sten, and others attacked that position. The leading report was delivered by Deborin, and, in the end, as part of its proceedings, the conference voted a resolution on it which acted as a kind of official condemnation of mechanism.

It is interesting to notice the actual wording of this resolution. It contains eleven brief points, of which nine are more or less general. Points 6 and 7 contain the direct and concrete reference to the mechanist position:

"The most active revisionist philosophical tendency during latter years has been that of the mechanists (L. Axelrod, A. K. Timiriazev, A. Variash, and others). Carrying on what was in essence a struggle against the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism, not understanding the foundations of materialist dialectics, substituting for revolutionary materialistic dialectics a vulgar evolutionism, and for materialism, positivism, preventing, in point of fact, the penetration of the methodology of dialectical materialism into the realm of natural science, this tendency represents a clear departure from Marxist-Leninist philosophical positions.

"The conference considers it necessary to continue the systematic criticism and exposure of the mistakes of the mechanist school from the point of view of consistent Marxism-Leninism.

"The most important problems confronting the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism are the further development of the theory

of dialectics, and the thorough application of the method of dialectical materialism both in the field of social science . . . and natural science.

"The crisis through which the contemporary theory of natural science is passing is a continuation of that crisis which has already been analyzed by Lenin.[2] The present successes of natural science do not fit into the pattern of the old, mechanistic, formal logic theories. Here, bourgeois philosophy paralyzes itself, attempting to utilize the crisis in natural science for its own ends. However, a genuine solution of the fundamental difficulties of natural scientists can be attained only by applying the method of materialist dialectics." [3]

REJECTION OF "MENSHEVISING IDEALISM"

Hardly more than a year had passed from the time of this resolution regarding the first controversy, when a second, similarly large in scale, took possession of the field. This dispute, which was fought out around the issue of "idealism," or "menshevising idealism," serves as an excellent point of focus for tendencies from the late twenties to the present time.

In point of fact, it was before the first controversy had ended, while Deborin and his followers, during its closing years, were definitely gaining the upper hand, that a feeling arose among a large group of thinkers that neither of the contending schools was working out the kind of philosophic program and structure that were really needed. The feeling was that Deborin, and those who thought with him, had performed a necessary and valuable service in contending against the mechanists and exposing their errors, but that their own philosophical outlook suffered from two grave defects. First, they had gone too far in correcting the mechanists' mistakes: they

[2] See his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* J. S.

[3] *Sovremennye problemy filosofii marxizma (Contemporary Problems of the Philosophy of Marxism)*, pp 197–98. Moscow, 1929.

had leaned over backwards and fallen into the camp of idealists to whom things were reflections of ideas, rather than the reverse. Second, they had lost touch with the very rapidly, and, indeed, momentously developing social and economic situation of the whole Soviet experiment, particularly, the problems centering round the introduction of the first Five Year Plan, and the building up of the collective farm movement. This area of problems found little reflection in the work of Deborin and his group (any more than in the work of the mechanists); hence arose the charge of the divorcement of theory from practice.

Let us examine the nature and content of these charges. What did Deborin's opponents mean by saying that he had tumbled into the pitfall of a certain kind of idealism? It will help us to clarify the situation if we glance for a moment at the term used to characterize this "idealism." It is often translated as "menshevik," which both departs from the rule of grammar and loses the peculiar flavor of the meaning. The word in Russian is *menshevistvuiushchi*, a present participle which should be rendered by the "ing" form in English, making the phrase "menshevising idealism." There is a quite separate adjectival form in Russian for "menshevik," namely, *menshevistski*. The fact that this latter form is passed over, and the other deliberately chosen is a significant indication that it was the intention to accuse Deborin not so much of outright, full fledged adherence to "menshevism" (which, strictly taken, was the point of view of that pre-revolutionary faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party which was considered vague and unrealistic in ideology), but of a tendency, inclination or movement in that direction.[1] It was as much as to say, if he is

[1] It is amusing to note that the etymology is quaintly prosaic, and quite irrelevant to the content of the ideas that came to be involved. The historical fact is that members of this faction were called "mensheviks" because they happened to be in a minority at a certain congress of the party, held in 1903. The Russian word for minority is "menshinstvo"; hence, the word "menshevik." The group that formed the majority, led by Lenin, were dubbed "bolsheviks," from the Russian word for majority—"bolshinstvo."

not a menshevik, he is at least talking like a menshevik; he is menshevising, and if we do not stop him, he will become, once again, a complete menshevik.

It is well to note that the fear was that Deborin would "once again" become a menshevik. For he was never permitted to forget that, before the revolution, he had been in fact a genuine menshevik. Philosophically, this meant an adherence to the views of Plekhanov, the intellectual leader of the menshevik faction, rather than to those of Lenin, the leader of the bolsheviks. It meant the belief that Plekhanov was the guiding philosopher of the movement rather than Lenin.

Wherein lay the difference between these two leaders? The writer put this question to Deborin in the course of an interview in 1937 at the Academy of Sciences in Moscow, where Deborin occupied the position of head of the Division of Social Sciences of the Academy. He replied in the following terms:

"To speak concretely, let me cite my earlier views on the relation of Lenin and Plekhanov. A number of years ago, I used to be of the opinion, as my published writings show, that Lenin was our great political leader while Plekhanov was our great philosophic leader. I now see that this whole view of the situation sprang out of a false conception of the relation of theory and practice. I now see that Lenin was not only our political leader, but our theoretical leader as well—as a theoretician, greater by far than Plekhanov. Take, for instance, Lenin's whole theory of imperialism. Plekhanov never worked out any comparable doctrine of the basic aspects of present day capitalism. Then take Lenin's theory of the state—the whole concept of the Soviet state, which was of such critical importance in the building of socialism. It was Lenin who rose to that occasion in 1917, and not Plekhanov. Again, it was Lenin and not Plekhanov who understood the nature of the imperialist war, and who, consequently, never wavered in his attitude

towards it, whereas Plekhanov completely lost his bearings, and adopted a chauvinist position."

Long before the Revolution, Deborin's book, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Dialectical Materialism*, had appeared with a friendly preface by Plekhanov which was in great contrast to the remarks which Lenin penned in relation to the work. They were found in the margins of Lenin's copy of one of Deborin's chapters, printed in 1909 in advance of the full work. Lenin was greatly given to writing comments in margins, and among the remarks with which he sprinkled Deborin's chapter were: "inexact," "clumsy," "fibs," and "ne plus ultra of clumsiness." There is only one favorable comment, "right," next to an underlined passage.

The character of the group which rose up in opposition to Deborin throws light on the situation. It is a significant fact that almost all of them were younger men. They had neither special interest in the field of natural science, like the mechanists, nor in the history of philosophy, like the Deborinites. What they emphasized was the social and political contribution which they felt the philosophy ought to make to the currently developing reality. They were rather strict Leninists, and inclined to show little leniency towards the shortcomings of Plekhanov. Among their leading figures were Mitin and Yudin.

To them it seemed that Deborin and his followers had practically gone over to Hegelianism. While in regard to this point in itself, they arrived at the same general conclusion as the mechanists, it was for somewhat different reasons. It was on account of Deborin's conception of the methodology and ontology of natural science that the mechanists were prone to label him an idealist. However, it was rather Deborin's lack of a sharp orientation in the social and political sense that made Mitin accuse him of idealistic tendencies, that is, tendencies to deal with ideas apart from their connections with things.

PHILOSOPHIC THEORY AND SOCIAL PRACTICE

We noted at the outset that one of the principal objections made to the work of Deborin and his followers was that they allowed theory to become divorced from practice. To understand this charge, we must go back to the event which had originally set the ball of controversy rolling. This event was the now famous speech delivered by Stalin at the Conference of Agrarian Marxists. This conference took place in December, 1929, in the midst of the titanic struggles to collectivize the land, struggles which as it turned out, decided the future mode of life of tens of millions of peasant farmers. In the course of his talk, which was mainly devoted to theoretical questions, or rather to the relation between certain theories and certain matters of practice, Stalin took occasion to make the remark which became so well known, and played such a large part in the philosophical discussion.

"But if we have reason to be proud of our practical successes in the field of socialist construction," he said, "it is quite impossible to say the same about our theoretical work in the field of economics in general, and in rural economy in particular. More than that: it is necessary to recognize that our theoretical work is not keeping up with our practical successes, that there is a gap between practical achievements and the development of theory. Meanwhile, what is necessary is that theoretical work should not only keep pace with the practical, but should move in advance of it, arming the practitioners in their struggle for the victory of socialism." [1]

It is interesting to note that Stalin does not refer specifically to the field of philosophy at all, but to economics. However, those who felt that the same was true of the former field seized eagerly upon his remarks and made them the occasion of initi-

[1] *K voprosam agrarnoi politiki v S.S.S.R* (*On Problems of Agrarian Politics in the U.S.S.R.*).

ating in philosophy a discussion which largely turned on the issue of the relation of theory to practice. What this meant in reality was the relation of philosophical work to the great practical problems, involving ethical, social, and methodological issues, facing the Soviets in the late twenties and early thirties. These problems were certainly serious enough, as we realize when we recall that it was at this time that the whole issue of economic and social planning was bitterly fought to a conclusion, and the extremely far-reaching decision to abandon the "New Economic Policy" had to be carried through.

There was no doubt of the fact that the NEP, which had been instituted by Lenin, was in the nature of a "compromise with capitalism," a compromise whereby one part of the national economy was turned over to private capital, while the other part remained on a socialist basis. It had become quite clear that the Soviet state was at that time unable to manage the entire national economy along socialist lines. The question in 1928 was whether the country was yet prepared to take the plunge into completely socialist waters. The economic and political conditions themselves were by no means such as to answer that question automatically. In fact, it might be truly said that, in a certain sense, the way in which the problem presented itself to the leaders was this: perhaps only an immediate attempt at complete socialism will be our salvation, for our regime is in some ways weaker than it ever was. In other words, things had reached that pass wherein some were inclined to say, let us throw away the crutch of capitalism, lest we become used to it; to which others would reply, we are as yet too weak, and if we try to walk unaided now, we may cripple ourselves permanently, or at least, set back our final recovery indefinitely.

It was the opinion of Mitin and his group that while the country was thus hesitating on the brink of taking the decisive step, neither the Deborinites nor the mechanists understood the

gravity of the social situation; both were insensitive to their philosophic obligations in the face of it. They were not doing their part, as the matter was phrased then, "to find the laws of the transitional period," i.e., the transition from NEP to socialism. It was that situation around which, as Mitin felt, the philosophic work should mainly revolve, whereas the Deborinites were principally preoccupied with problems of interpreting the history of philosophy. Meanwhile, in regard to sociological matters, it was Bukharin's theories which, by default, as one might say, were left to stand in the field, for in spite of the fact that they were espoused by neither the Deborinites nor the strict mechanists, neither group worked out anything with which to replace them. It was such conditions that gave rise to Mitin's charge of divorcement of theory from practice, and "scholasticism" on the part of the Deborin group.

The issues were discussed at length in a philosophical conference which met for three days in October, 1930. Everyone concerned presented his views. Among the leading speakers on one side were Mitin and Yudin, and on the other, Deborin, Karev and Sten. The closing stages of the discussion were marked by Deborin's admission that his leadership had been faulty, and that he had not carried out his philosophic obligations in the face of the very serious social problems confronting the people. The consensus of opinion was that philosophic work should proceed along the lines indicated by Mitin's group. The results of the conference were regarded as a new "turn on the philosophic front," in accordance with which curricula and research were given new emphases.

The disputes had been carried on within the Communist Party (to which all the disputants belonged), as well as publicly, and the Central Executive Committee of that party issued, on January 25, 1931, a decision recommending a change in the policies of the leading philosophical periodical, *Pod Znamenem Marxizma*, along the lines of the new *povorot* or turn. Deborin

remained as a member of the editorial board, but his influence was no longer as great as it had been. Mitin and Yudin were added to the board.

What were the net effects of these two controversies? They had effects of lasting significance in molding the character of the materialistic outlook of Soviet philosophy. These effects might be summed up in terms of scope, method and temper. As to scope, the first controversy brought about a widening and broadening of commitment and effort. It meant that responsibility was to be assumed for the whole range of traditional problems—in ontology, ethics, epistemology, esthetics, and the history of philosophy, as well as the philosophy of science and of society. As regards this increased scope, the second controversy meant that, while other philosophic interests were added to the previous preoccupation with natural and social science, there should be no loosening of the underlying ties with the scientific spirit, and, especially, no diminution of intensity in the sense of social objectives.

In terms of method, the first controversy resulted in a greater receptivity to generalization, theory, and synthesis, to which the second added the necessity of seeing these methodological instrumentalities in the focus of practice, in terms of verification by reference to the actual development of historical reality.

In point of temper, an elusive but important category, the first controversy meant an effort to substitute a certain integrative urbanity for insular specialism, while the second meant the effort to retain the integrative quality, but to harden it, and give it the sharp edge of social realism.

CHAPTER VIII

DISSEMINATION OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE U.S.S.R.

METHODS OF BRINGING SOVIET PHILOSOPHY TO THE PEOPLE

The functioning Soviet system itself is, of course, the most potent instrument through which the spirit, ideals and objectives of Soviet philosophy are inculcated into the people of the country. In any society the process of education—of communicating information, of influencing beliefs and habits—is one that does not take place exclusively, or perhaps even mainly, in the class room. The operating social institutions, with all their conditioning power, the avenues of public information, such as the press and radio, the content of the popular and fine arts, including the stage and screen, are all immensely important in this regard.

The Soviet citizen not only comes in contact with the *ideas* of a socialist philosophy; he sees it in action around him, lives out its patterns, shares its values and suffers its mistakes. There is an interpenetration of theory and practice on a scale that is exceptionally huge and bold, although it is sometimes rough and crude. As we have seen, the ethical principles of socialist humanism are implemented in laws and constitutional provisions. In the operation of the political, economic, domestic and cultural institutions the Soviet citizen feels the impact of basic principles, in terms both of responsibilities and fruits. In the process, no opportunity is lost and no effort is spared to bring home to him the significance of what he is doing, the nature of the problems that face him, the goals and objectives towards

which the society is moving, and the necessity of the methods employed to reach them. Articles in the press, discussions in working establishments, party groups and trade unions, propaganda campaigns, radio programs, and much of the content of the popular arts contribute to this end.

One of the most remarkable facts about the Soviet Union is what might be called the psychology of the people. It is a psychology of building something new—a new way of life. The proportion of people who do not have this awareness in the U.S.S.R. is very small. It could not be said that they are all in favor of it, nor could it be maintained that the building process has been without grave blunders and consequent suffering. All people pay for their mistakes, and the Russians have made their share. However, it might be noted in passing that there is no evidence that the vast majority are not in favor of building the new way of life, and there is a good deal of evidence that they are. This situation is not at all strange, considering how little the majority got out of life under the old regime, and how much relative improvement there has been under the new.

Whatever may be the exact margin of disaffection and failure, the evident and important fact is the extremely widespread consciousness of participating in the building of a new society. The sense of having a philosophy has not come to the Soviet citizen as something added, over and above the normal run of his life. It has come to him as an intrinsic part of the handling of the problems and difficulties with which he was faced as a result of the first world war and the disintegration of the tsarist order. Philosophy has taken on the aspect of a living instrument, and the unmistakable feeling of the general run of people is that they are engaged in a vast planned enterprise that is of deep and pioneering significance.

This feeling has given them an extraordinary sense of confidence and power. It is epitomized in a passage of a song which was immensely popular when I was in the Soviet Union. Liter-

ally translated, it reads: "We will be everything, create everything, open up everything, from the North Pole to the blue sky. When the country calls for something heroic, everyone will turn out to be a hero." It should be noted that this was not a war song, but dated from several years before the war. It is interesting to compare the sentiment with that expressed by Walt Whitman in his "Song of the Open Road":

> "I think heroic deeds were all conceived in the open air . . .
> I think I could stop here myself and do miracles,
> I think whatever I shall meet on the road I shall like, and
> whoever beholds me shall like me."

There is no doubt that the American spirit has shared this feeling of exuberant confidence, however different the way in which we arrived at it, and however much of it may have worn off since our pioneering days. Even the note of boastfulness has a familiar ring.

When the Soviet citizen works, he never forgets that he is working *socialistically*. When he studies, or sends his children to school, it is clear to him that he does so on the basis of a *Soviet*, not a tsarist concept. When his health is taken care of by a physician or a hospital, he connects it with the provisions of the *Soviet Constitution*. When women or ethnic minorities take advantage of rights and opportunities they never possessed before, they know it is an implementation of the principles of *Soviet philosophy*. When the Soviet voter takes part in elections, he or she is reminded that the economic security, the national health and education services, the legal protection against race and sex discrimination are of the essence of *Soviet* as distinguished from capitalist democracy, and the thesis is driven home that it could only have been on the basis of a one-party system that those gains could have been made in that country. When problems of a social, political or economic nature are encountered, they are approached and discussed as

problems in the *construction of socialism.* The Five Year Plans are measured in terms of their contribution to the fulfillment of *socialism* and as steps towards *communism.* All along the line, theory is connected with practice, and practice with theory.

Among administrative agencies, it is undoubtedly the Communist Party which takes the lead in this process. Responsibility for ideological direction and clarification falls to its members in the various working establishments and other institutions. Persons with keen social interests, with organizational or leadership abilities naturally become interested in the party and the party in them, because the party is in executive control. In its membership it apparently does not stress quantity—a few millions out of a population of more than 175 millions—but rather, a genuine willingness to do hard work, take responsibilities, make sacrifices if necessary, and master basic ideological principles. Everything important is discussed by the party, and a "line" taken. All sorts of campaigns are organized and movements launched. There is no evidence that party members generally consider themselves an "elite" looking upon the people with contempt or keeping aloof from them. On the contrary, they seem, as a rule, to be very much of and with the people, and to take seriously the principle which they profess, that the main source of their strength is their closeness to the people. They do not live better than non-party members who do the same grade of work; in fact, during earlier periods of restricted national income, there was a ruling under which many of them received less salary than non-party members doing the same work.

In newspapers and magazines, on stage and screen, in the popular and fine arts of the Soviet Union, there is a strong sense of ideological direction. The principles on which the society is based, and the objectives it is striving to attain are kept alive in the public consciousness, given the force of reiteration and the glow of artistic presentation. There is no doubt that this process has involved a certain measure of crudity, and also of artificial

imposition. These are the natural faults which would be characteristic of such a situation. However, in our discussions, they are usually exaggerated out of all proportion. We have usually been so anxious to see this kind of fault that we have often overlooked some very basic facts. It is painfully easy to be over-sophisticated about such a matter, and to miss the core of meaning and significance that is present.

For instance, it is a fact that the process of building a new society dedicated to the attainment of human objectives previously never gained by the people involved is a process that will naturally call forth interest and enthusiasm on the part of writers, artists, scientists, scholars, and teachers. There is no self-evident truth that artistic, scientific and scholarly people are, in the nature of things, exclusively critical and never happy except when they are objecting to something. There is also no self-evident truth that, for the good of their own work, they must never develop a spirit of social cooperation, or a feeling of social responsibility. In other words, it would be the height of superficiality to imagine that the sense of social values, the consciousness of broad and deep objectives running through the popular and fine arts in the Soviet Union is not, for the most part, sincere and genuine. Indeed, we must admit that a thing of that kind can easily be an immense source of creativity, a pillar of strength to the artist, the thinker and the publicist.

No one can read Soviet novels, stories and poems, see the plays and motion pictures, follow the press, listen to the music and radio programs, look at the painting and sculpture, without realizing that the process of building a new society is a capital source of material. It is colorful, exciting, and reaches into the deepest problems of human life. The public acquires certain tastes along these lines, and artists themselves are influenced. Appetite seems to grow by what it feeds on, so that the same process which provides an outlet for moral energies builds up an ever increasing reservoir of social aspiration.

The artist or thinker in the Soviet Union undoubtedly feels that the position he occupies in relation to the kind of situation we have been describing is just as "natural" as the position of the artist or thinker in capitalist society. The former feels it "natural" to cooperate with the state probably as much as the latter feels it "natural" to be suspicious of any intervention on the part of the state. In either society, there are, of course, problems of finding a market or audience, of building up a taste for something new, of gaining a reputation, and the like. In a socialist society the substructure of control underlying the arts is, by and large, political. In a capitalist society this control lies principally in the power of money. It would probably be safe to say that in no society is any artist entirely free. We shall return to the question of freedom in a moment. In terms of philosophy, the result in the Soviet Union has been that the public has absorbed a surpassing education in the meaning, significance and possibilities of the principles underlying its efforts to build a new way of life.

PHILOSOPHY TEACHING: CURRICULUM

The study of philosophy occupies a prominent place in the Soviet curriculum. It is a part of practically all institutions of higher learning, including what we would call college, university, professional school, technical institute, and research institute. The general compulsory minimum is a one year course covering not only the principles of dialectical and historical materialism, but the history of philosophy from the pre-Socratic times to the present day. This survey is based upon required readings from original sources in the works of leading thinkers and schools. While materialist tendencies are emphasized, non-materialists and anti-materialists are widely examined. It should be noted that there is no foundation in fact for the view that philosophers like Plato, Berkeley, Leibniz or Kant are not

studied in the Soviet Union. In addition to courses in institutions of higher learning, the Middle School or Ten Year School (ages 7–8 to 17–18) includes some work in logic and in social thought. It is also significant to observe that, among the three basic examinations which any student must pass in order to do graduate work in any field, one is in philosophy. The other two are in his own speciality and a foreign language.

In 1938 a project, sponsored by official and semi-official sources, for a new and longer compulsory minimum philosophy course, was under discussion. There was a widespread feeling that the study of philosophy should be intensified and increased. While apparently the new project was never technically adopted as a compulsory minimum, it was undoubtedly used as a guide for basic courses in many institutions, as part of the general expansion in this field. The projected course provided for 124 lecture hours and 60 seminar hours (what we would ordinarily call a 12 point or two year course), and was devoted to the history of philosophy and the principles of dialectical and historical materialism. The historical survey began with Heraclitus and included the Eliatics, Democritus, Epicurus, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Scholastics, Copernicus, Telesio, Bruno, Campanella, Galileo, Bacon, Hobbes, Gassendi, Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Tolland, Priestley, Newton, Leibniz, Berkeley, Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau, La Mettrie, Diderot, Holbach, Helvetius, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Feuerbach, Belinski, Hertzen, Chernishevski, Nietzsche, and twentieth-century tendencies, including "the ideology of fascism."

Besides general and compulsory courses, there are all sorts of special and optional courses covering such fields as ontology, methodology, epistemology, social philosophy, ethics, philosophy of art, philosophy of law, and the like. The two higher degrees to which graduate work leads in the U.S.S.R. are called Candidate of Science and Doctor of Science.

There is a widespread and increasing dissemination of the

classics of philosophy in the U.S.S.R. It should be noted that the Soviet handling of philosophy has not resulted in a narrowing down or restricting of the philosophic works available to the public. In fact, it has actually made available to the public, in large scale, low priced editions, many of the classics of philosophic thought hardly ever printed in Russia previously. The following table gives figures comparing the tsarist and Soviet regimes in regard to the publication of works of a representative group of philosophers.

	From 1897 to 1916 (Copies in thousands)	*From 1917 to 1938 (Copies in thousands)*
Aristotle	1	78.3
Voltaire	65	228.6
Hegel	5	200.5
Diderot	2	139.1
Spinoza	8	55.2
Feuerbach	10	44
Bacon	0	23
Holbach	0	79.4
Helvetius	0	67.5
Democritus	0	10

METHODS OF TEACHING AND STUDY

The teaching of philosophy in the Soviet Union is, of course, approached from a Marxian, dialectical point of view. There is probably no need to emphasize the fact that the viewpoint is Marxian, but there would seem to be some need to emphasize the significance of the dialectical aspect. As we have seen from our previous discussion, the dialectical method is, above all, an historical one. It means treating and evaluating things in terms of their historical sequence and interconnectedness. That is to say, the Soviet point of view does not look upon other schools and tendencies in the history of philosophy as in

a sort of timeless competition with itself, and therefore deserving of intellectual rejection. In terms of its own fundamental method, it looks upon other schools as it looks upon itself, that is, as outgrowths of certain historical circumstances, as products of a certain stage in the historical development of human society. Hence, it is quite natural for Soviet philosophers and teachers to feel that the thing to do about the classic schools and systems is not to ignore them, or simply criticize and "refute" them, but to see how they grew out of what came before, to gauge the extent of their contributions to the ongoing stream of human culture, to the progress of the sciences, and to the strengthening of those concepts and institutions which became of increasing importance and effectiveness in the unfolding history of man.

In other words, each thinker or system is judged in relation to the problems and conditions which set the stage reached in the development of knowledge up to his time. He is not asked to solve problems that had not yet arisen, but he is asked what contribution he made to those which had, and which became increasingly important as time went on. What role did the given system of thought play in relation to that which was dying away and that which was growing up in the world to which it addressed itself? It is strongly felt by the Soviet thinker that anyone who would profess to be seriously interested in the history of philosophy, but who does not raise this question in some detail is deluding himself. He is not really thinking of the *history* of philosophy, or taking history seriously at all. At most, he is thinking statically of the ideas involved in a philosophical system, as if the ideas were really independent of history, as if their meaning and significance could be appreciated by examining them apart from the past out of which they grew and the future which they influenced in one way or another.

The Soviet method of teaching philosophy tries to avoid two failings, each of which, it feels, does an injustice to history. One

is that to which we have just referred, which seems, in Soviet eyes, to amount to a denial of history. The other failing is to take some standard as a *static* criterion, to measure everything offered in past history against it, and to reject whatever does not fulfill it. This procedure is regarded as mechanical, somewhat like being contemptuous of seeds in general, because they are not flowers. In the Soviet viewpoint, this procedure has faults akin to those of "vulgar sociology" which we examined in Chapter IV. As we have seen, such a method is faulty, not because we can do without standards, but because our standards must have in them the dimension of motion, development, evolution. Standards, of course, also involve a moral issue. No treatment of history can be completely amoral. There is always the necessity of selection, and of making some kind of judgment. While seeds cannot be rejected because they are not flowers, neither can all seeds be accepted on a basis of equality just because they are all capable of growth.

In dealing with a philosopher like Aristotle, for example, the Soviet method is not to measure his conclusions against the contemporary principles of dialectical materialism, point out the differences, and then show that Aristotle was in error. It is rather to take Aristotle in terms of the conditions and problems which he faced, and show his relation to what went before and what came after. In doing this, the Soviet method does not assume that everything that went before and came after was of equal importance or value. It is frankly interested in the concepts and institutions which meant expanding possibilities for the mass of people and for the progress of science. Thus Aristotle's justification of slavery, and his opposition to democracy, a basic part of his political and ethical views, is gauged in relation not only to the fact that the whole economy of the ancient world was a slave economy, but also in relation to the fact that there were thinkers who saw beyond slavery, and challenged it, and who saw the human values and possibilities of increased

democracy, and championed it, while Aristotle did not. At the same time, Aristotle is highly praised for his defense of reason as the basis of the good life, and for his contribution to the development of scientific thinking, his great synthesis of scientific effort which was peculiarly needed at the stage of development reached by knowledge in his time. It will be observed that this attitude is taken in spite of the fact that the specific conclusions which Aristotle reached in regard to the nature of scientific methodology, as we have seen in Chapter VI, are, taken by themselves, quite contrary to the conclusions of contemporary materialist dialecticians.

The reader who wishes to examine in detail a characteristic treatment of Aristotle along these lines can consult the volume entitled *Aristotel* by G. Alexandrov, published in 1940, Moscow. A detailed summary of this work in English by the present writer will be found in *Philosophic Abstracts*, No. 10, N. Y. The most detailed treatment of the history of philosophy from the Soviet viewpoint will be found in the work *Istoriia filosofii* (*History of Philosophy*) projected in seven volumes, three of which have been published to date under the auspices of the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences.

It may be contended by some that when any viewpoint at all enters into the teaching of philosophy, it is bound to have an adverse effect, and to lower the value of the teaching, that the only adequate teaching takes place when there is no viewpoint present. If this be true (and it could by no means be regarded as a self-evident truth) then there has been very little adequate teaching of philosophy in the history of education so far. The great majority of teachers of philosophy would probably agree that it is practically impossible to take no viewpoint whatever. What usually happens is that different teachers take different viewpoints, and some teachers different viewpoints at different times. Also, some teachers teach from a viewpoint without knowing it. This way of doing things has its advantages,

namely, personal freedom (within limits, of course) and variety. It also has the disadvantage of lack of integration and lack of any close relation between philosophic theory and social practice.

No one could seriously claim, in the opinion of the present writer, that the Soviet teaching and writing which has actually been done so far in the field of philosophy represents a complete fulfillment of the conditions of its method. Indeed, such a view would be incompatible with the fact that Soviet philosophers and teachers have been highly critical of one another. The important controversies which we examined in the preceding chapter are cases in point. Reviews appearing in Soviet journals are frequently sharply critical of some of the most widely heralded works, emanating from the most important research centers. For instance, Volume III of the seven volume *History of Philosophy* published by the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences was so heavily criticized after its appearance in print that an official prize previously awarded to it was withdrawn.

It is natural that there should be mistakes, shortcomings, debate and criticism in regard to fulfilling the conditions of the Soviet method described above. It is a complex, not a simple method, and it certainly does not permit of automatic or mechanical application. There is nothing about this method which necessitates our assuming that the philosophers and teachers who profess it in the Soviet Union are insincere or hypocritical. Neither is there any evidence that, as a general rule, the government imposes it artificially or brutally from above. In general, it works out through the philosophers themselves and relies, for the most part, on the moral energies, the sense of disciplined responsibility and the reservoir of social aspirations called forth by the whole situation.

Anyone who thinks that cynicism is the prevailing mood of Soviet teachers and scholars will discover, if he makes wide-

spread observations in such circles in the U.S.S.R., that he is entertaining a creation of his own fancy. Of course, if a critic of the Soviet Union (or of anything else) refuses to begin with an open mind, or refuses to entertain the postulate that there might be essential good faith at the basis of the system he is examining, then nothing that he finds could ever convince him. He will easily be able to explain away, to his own satisfaction, anything whatsoever that occurs. If the principles and goals as stated seem worthy, he can say that they are only statements, with no real intention to carry them out. If they are being carried out, he can say that it is only temporary, or for some dark and inscrutable motive which will eventually poison and negate the whole thing. Or, as a variant, he can say that the methods employed constitute a ruthless imposition on the great majority by a small clique, which stultifies the human mind and warps personality. Pursuing this line, he can say that nothing is ever done unless it is approved by the small clique, that no criticism of what has been done is permitted. Then, if criticism is forthcoming among Soviet thinkers, if debates and changes of view take place, he can still say that it is all insincere, a put up job, done at the instigation of the government, perhaps in order to fool foreigners, or from some other devious motive. The users of this method show a kind of consistency which recalls the saying: "To the solemn all things are solemn."

THE ISSUE OF FREEDOM IN TEACHING AND STUDY

It will be clear not only from the foregoing discussion, but from the whole content of this book that anyone who identifies freedom with the concept of *laissez-faire*, with the principle that the state must remain neutral, will not consider that there is much freedom in the teaching of philosophy in the U.S.S.R. However, as we have seen in our earlier discussions of freedom, the Soviet philosopher would probably point out that he does

not want or need the freedom *of laissez-faire;* he wants and needs freedom *from laissez-faire*, from the consequences of what he considers philosophic irresponsibility, a general divorcement of philosophic theory from social practice. The Soviet thinker would stress that this preference of his is not a timeless or absolute standard. He is quite willing to recognize, or rather, eager to point out that history poses different problems at different times and places, that sometimes the one kind of freedom and sometimes the other is the more valuable.

In all fairness, it cannot be too strongly emphasized that the predominant method of dealing with philosophers or teachers of philosophy who are considered to be on the wrong track in their work is not to arrest, imprison or execute them. For example, as we have seen, the philosophers whose work was severely criticized in the controversies around mechanism and "menshevising idealism" were not arrested, imprisoned or executed. Neither were they removed from connection with the field of philosophy. What happened in most cases was that they were, for a time, given posts of less responsibility and power. It should also be emphasized that the works of these philosophers were not as a rule removed from sale or circulation, although they were no longer used for the purposes of teaching as they had been previously. Their works could be purchased in book stores and were available in libraries. A list of the titles of some of their works which I myself purchased appears in *Twentieth Century Philosophy*.[1]

The crux of the matter is, of course, that in the Soviet Union philosophy is not looked upon as a purely theoretical enterprise, but as a living instrument with a part to play in the building of a new life. There is no inherent reason why this concept of philosophy should be regarded as on a lower moral plane than the concept of philosophy as pure intellectual speculation. It might possibly be different if there had not been a

[1] Ed. Runes, p. 502.

pressing necessity for a reconstruction of the social order. If this reconstruction could have been brought closer by the *laissez-faire* attitude, or if the satisfaction of human aspirations in the given concrete situation could have been more fully attained by pure intellectual speculation, the Soviet viewpoint undoubtedly would be different from what it is.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the extent to which the whole Soviet policy and practice in this regard is thought of as arising out of the specific and stubborn necessities which confronted the Soviet system from the moment of its birth. When one argues these problems of freedom with Soviet thinkers, they do not invoke "eternal principles." They invoke the fact that the Soviet regime was faced with the responsibility of doing something about a population of a hundred and seventy-five millions who were suffering from large scale illiteracy, disease, hunger, economic insecurity, industrial backwardness, race and sex discrimination, aggravated by the breakdown of a semi-feudal tsarist order, a civil war, the pronounced hostility of the major capitalist powers, including the threat of possible military attack and the reality of armed intervention. Freedom from those things was their great problem. While exceptional progress has been made in many of these areas in the relatively short history of the country so far, it could not be said that a normal condition of acceptance and security, especially in its international dealings, has yet been attained.

The question is sometimes raised as to what would happen in the U.S.S.R. if a teacher of philosophy taught or wrote in favor of some school of thought other than dialectical materialism, or professed himself to be opposed to the latter. In all probability, what would happen is that his fellow teachers and his students would question him in concrete terms. They would ask why he was opposed to dialectical materialism, whether it meant that he was opposed to the objectives for which it stood. Was he opposed to the attainment of economic security for all, health

care and education for the whole people, the abolition of race and sex discrimination, the increased participation of the people in art and science, the defense and security of the regime engaged in the gaining of these objectives? If the individual in question replied that he did not agree with those objectives, if he believed, for example, in some concept of race superiority, or an economic elite, in an aristocratic or fascist society, he would not be permitted to advocate his views. It would be considered that any freedom given to him to further such principles would constitute an unfair interference with the freedom of the great majority to attain the ends which they desire. The two freedoms conflict; they could not both be granted at the same time.

If, on the other hand, he replied that he was in favor of the objectives mentioned, it would be pointed out to him that his actual philosophy was basically the same as what was meant by materialism, and that there was no reason to place himself in opposition to it in principle. It would then become a matter of ways and means of attaining the objectives in question. He would be asked if he had any evidence that these objectives could be attained any better, under the conditions which faced the Soviet peoples, by any other methods, broadly speaking, than those which were used. Our dissenter could not easily make out a case in such a debate, since some of these objectives have, in fact, never been attained to the same degree anywhere else. In any event, it would be pointed out, his differences were not in regard to ends and goals, but to means and methods, so that he should, in all logic, work with others, acknowledging the community of aims, and reaching the most practicable consensus in regard to methods. Soviet problems and conditions have not been such as to make dissent seem like a value in itself. The reader will have to make up his own mind whether one cause of this outcome is that there are conditions in which dissent is not a value in itself, or whether the situation arose in spite of the fact that dissent should always be regarded as a

value in itself. If the individual persisted in his opposition, he would in all probability be removed from the teaching of philosophy, although he would not be denied a livelihood at the level of his qualifications in some other field.

Probably the reason why the impression has arisen that people considered guilty of philosophical "deviations" are arrested or executed in the Soviet Union is that some persons, like Bukharin, who were shot in the "treason trials" were philosophers and writers. The popular mind, spurred by the sensational (and generally hostile) press, then jumped to the conclusion that it must have been because of their philosophical opinions that they were executed. However, there is no evidence, apart from rumors, for such a conclusion in that instance or any other instance. The fact of the matter is that Bukharin and the others were accused of overt acts in conspiracy with foreign powers to bring about armed invasion and military defeat of the U.S.S.R. They admitted being guilty of a sufficient number of these acts to have warranted severe punishment under the criminal code of any country in the world.

Of course, the adamantine critic who will not admit of any kind of good faith in the Soviet Union will say that somehow these confessions were insincere, that, in spite of the fact that trial proceedings were conducted in public, before an audience which included foreign correspondents, visitors, ambassadors, diplomats and the like, it was all an elaborate farce played out, for some strange reason, by the victims themselves. Besides involving dubious insinuations about the characters of the very men who were supposed to be persons of high intellectual integrity, this type of hypothesis, if entertained, could easily explain away any court proceedings anywhere.

The principle acted on in the Soviet Union is not that the holding of incorrect philosophical views by a given individual *must* result in dangerous political activity. If such were the principle, all the philosophers criticized in the important contro-

versies we have examined would have come under political charges, and their works would have been banned. Barring abuse of power, no thinker comes under criminal charges and penalties unless he commits overt acts defined by the criminal code. When this happens, his works are very likely to be banned until the situation of which they were a part no longer exists. Thus, for example, while Bukharin's works are available to qualified researchers, they have been barred from general sale and circulation since the period of the trials.

THE ORGANIZATION OF PHILOSOPHY RESEARCH

Soviet research in the field of philosophy, as in other fields, is distinguished by two factors probably not to be found anywhere else on the same scale. planning, and the utilization of collective, cooperative resources. The most important research center is the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences, located in Moscow. This is purely a research organization, with no teaching responsibilities, and is one of the units of the Division of Social Sciences within the Academy of Sciences. The Academy, always the chief intellectual and scientific body in the country, has a history which goes back to the times of Peter the Great. However, under the tsarist regime, there was no department devoted to social science, and its work included very little direct consideration of philosophy.

The researchers connected with the Institute of Philosophy are divided into two categories: permanent staff, and part time or temporary staff. As a rule, there are around twenty or thirty members of the permanent staff, ranging from young persons who have but recently completed graduate training to one or two who might hold the rank of Academician. Normally they spend their full time at research in the Institute, which has its own library and other facilities. The temporary or part time

staff, may amount to as many as a hundred or more scholars in the course of a year.

The Institute of Philosophy has its Five Year Plan, a part of that of the country as a whole. Plans of the Institute are proposed and discussed at a series of meetings of the permanent staff. Individuals, specialists and groups in sub-divisions of the Institute devoted to various phases of philosophy report on what they feel should be undertaken, and estimate what they could do in the period ahead. The five years are broken down into one year units, for each of which there is a projected plan. Plans of the Institute of Philosophy form, of course, a part of the overall plan of the Academy of Sciences, and must be approved by the Gosplan or the State Planning Commission, which has administrative responsibility for the Five Year Plan as a whole. The intermediate and larger planning bodies, of course, have their budgetary and other problems and limitations, as well as increased authority in proportion to their sphere of action. The final plans of the Institute of Philosophy represent the results of proposals, discussions and modifications travelling in both directions—from the smaller working units to the larger agencies, and from the central planning bodies to the Institute staff itself. It goes without saying that in this sort of process, few working establishments can get exactly what they ask for, and sometimes are asked to do more than they originally suggested. However, the present writer attended several of the planning meetings of the Institute of Philosophy, and can testify that the discussions were full and frank, very far from a mere rubber stamping of decisions from above. There is a good deal of "criticism and self-criticism" based on previous experiences wherein plans were over-ambitious, individuals failed to fulfill assignments, or were given too little to do, and the like.

One of the outstanding collective research projects of the Institute of Philosophy at the present time is the seven volume

History of Philosophy, three volumes of which have so far been published. When completed, this work will, in all probability, be the most extensive and detailed study of the history of philosophy in any language. Another remarkable project was the *Brief Dictionary of Philosophy*, published just before the war, which has already sold more than two million copies in the U.S.S.R.

The Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences, as a permanent organization devoted exclusively to research on a considerable scale probably has no counterpart in any country, so far as the field of philosophy is concerned. In addition to this central organization, there are other Soviet institutes devoted wholly or in part to philosophy, some of which, like the Moscow State Institute of History, Philosophy and Literature, combine research with teaching functions, while others are purely research bodies, like the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute (Moscow) which covers the whole range of writings, including philosophy, by the classic figures of the Marxian tradition. Supplementing the research which comes from such sources, there is a considerable volume of work emanating from faculties and departments of philosophy in universities and other institutions.

In addition, individual research, not connected with any group plan, is produced in various ways. A person already working in some institution of learning may write an article or a book outside the scope of his regular duties, or an individual in no way connected officially with the field of philosophy may use his spare time to do research and contribute to publications.

CHAPTER IX

ABOUT READING

Soviet philosophy is, of course, founded on the work of Marx and Engels. The careful student will make a close examination of this classic heritage of Marxist thought, wherein he will find the spectacles through which Soviet eyes see the world. The works of these founding fathers should be read as much for method as for conclusions. Put in other words, some of their most important conclusions were about method, that is, how to approach and deal with problems, where to begin and what to look for. And it is this side of their work that has been emphasized in Soviet philosophy and actual policy. The relation between what Soviet leaders are doing and the writings of Marx and Engels is not like that of a pharmacist to a prescription which he is expected to fill out to the letter. It is more like the situation of Koch's or Pasteur's pupils, who, having learned fundamental strategies of "microbe hunting" from the masters, now have to apply them under concrete conditions and to certain specific maladies which did not exist at the earlier period.

Whatever may be the extent of agreement or disagreement with their theses, it is evident that Marx and Engels must have been among the best educated men of the nineteenth century. They were genuine scholars in the traditional sense of possessing mountains of historical erudition and a formidable array of linguistic equipment. They were at home in the world of ancient classical learning, and exceptionally proficient in modern tongues. Each of them apparently could read in practically any European language, and write for publication in at least three—

German, French and English. Marx learned Russian when he was past fifty. (His method must have been a forerunner of the intensive school of the present day, for we are told that, after six months of study, he was reading poetry and official government documents.) Engels made detailed contributions to problems of philology and linguistics.

What was equally important for their work was the fact that they (especially Engels) kept in close touch not only with the political and economic problems of their day, but with the new developments in natural science. Engels' *Anti-Duhring* and *Dialectics of Nature* leave no doubt as to his competence in these fields. Thus their method and intellectual temper developed in contact with diverse fields and periods. All in all, the work of Marx and Engels represents not only a rare example of intellectual collaboration, actually extending over a period of some fifty years, but an extraordinary fusion of classic historical learning with newly developing science. This sense of range within the old and keen aliveness to values in the new gives an unusual tang of interest to the exploration of their work. It is sometimes heavy, but seldom stuffy, sometimes very complex, seldom merely pedantic.

The actual quantity of written work left by Marx and Engels is so great in volume as to be almost unbelievable. Moreover, large as is the quantity of Marx's writings published to date, the amount of his work not yet published is about equal to the amount so far published, according to information given the present writer by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in Moscow, which has charge of publishing fundamental editions and collected works. There is also a considerable amount of unpublished work of Engels, although it does not compare in bulk with that of Marx.

The work of Lenin is comparable in importance to that of Marx and Engels as a basic source. In one sense, its importance is more direct, since it reflects the specifically Russian scene,

and the actual problems of attaining and exercising state power. While it is also comparable in point of bulk, it lacks the diversified range and scope of the work of his two predecessors. Lenin was well equipped in a scholarly sense, trained professionally as a lawyer, and was a master of many languages, with which his writings are sprinkled. Like Marx and Engels, he lived in many countries, and was a man of cosmopolitan culture. His intellectual output tends to center on social, political and economic problems, including the chief issues of philosophy. He did not possess the historical erudition of Marx or the familiarity with science that Engels acquired. However, there is no one in the history of socialist thought who surpasses Lenin in the incisiveness of his grip on the major issues of social life, in the entire *aliveness* of his conception and expression, in the high level of shrewd and uncompromising realism which he sustains, somehow, through forty volumes.

The sophisticated (as opposed to the merely academic) student of Soviet philosophy will by no means overlook the important place of Stalin's work. While his written output has not yet attained the extent or historical significance of the other sources mentioned, it is far more extensive, substantial and significant than is commonly imagined. In an age of specialization, it is difficult for most of us to consider anyone who, like Stalin, figures prominently in the role of a practical statesman, as being at the same time a thinker of philosophic importance. Yet if we bear in mind the vital function of philosophy as a guiding expression of social practice, and the fact that the connection between social practice and philosophic theory is so exceptionally close and explicit in the Soviet Union, we will be led to a realization of the immense significance of Stalin's work. His mind has dominated Soviet developments since the death of Lenin. It is a mind which compares in shrewdness with that of Lenin, but its outstanding characteristic is an ability to see calmly and state clearly what is utterly basic. It is characterized by a certain

Biblical simplicity which recalls something of the temper of Lincoln's writing, and an associated stylistic peculiarity: repetitiveness without prolixity.

The best way to see the scope and feel the fullness of the work of any really important figure is to go through it chronologically. It is an absorbing experience to trace the growth of a powerful mind. This does not necessarily mean to read every word written, but to follow the stages of the journey, lingering at the outstanding landmarks for close scrutiny. The most thorough and comprehensive foundation for an understanding of Soviet philosophy would be gained by exploring, in chronological order, the collected works of Marx-Engels and of Lenin in the editions noted below, and with special attention to the major works listed. There is as yet no collected edition of the works of Stalin. The nearest thing is his *Leninism*, which has been published in two volumes and in one. This work contains a good many of his articles, speeches, and longer essays, and a new edition has appeared every year or so. Recent editions have appeared under the title, *Selected Writings*. His separately published book, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question* is also of basic importance. A comprehensive investigation, beginning with these major sources, would follow through with a study of the contemporary Soviet thinkers listed below.

However, probably relatively few will feel that they have the time to pursue this sort of thorough exploration. The following suggestions are therefore made for briefer surveys. Anyone who can read fifteen or twenty fundamental works would do well to begin with two booklets: Engels' *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* and Marx's *Value, Price and Profit*. The first is a short statement of the general theory of historical materialism; the second explains the labor theory of value, and Marx's theory of surplus value. These should be followed by Marx's *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, the first volume of *Capital*, and Engels' *Dialectics of Nature*. Then Lenin's *Mate-*

rialism and Empirio-Criticism, and his *State and Revolution* should be read, followed by Stalin's *On Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, and the other writings in his *Leninism*. If Gorky's *Culture and the People*, and brief but important writings like the essays in *Literature and Marxism, A Controversy by Soviet Critics*, Lenin's essays on Tolstoi, Engels' *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, and his *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy* are added, a substantial foundation will have been laid. Those who read Russian will find a mine of value in such works as Lenin's *Filosofskie tetradi* (*Philosophical Notebooks*), *Sovremennye problemy filosofii marxizma* (*Contemporary Problems of Marxian Philosophy*) by Deborin and others, Mitin's *Boyevye voprosy materialisticheskoi dialektiki* (*Controversial Issues of Materialist Dialectics*), the article "Dialekticheskii materializm" in volume 22 of the *Bolshaia sovietskaia entsiklopediia* (*Great Soviet Encyclopedia*), and the *Kratkii filosofskii slovar* (*Brief Philosophic Dictionary*) edited by Rozental and Yudin.

A good list of about half the length of the preceding would include *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, *Value, Price and Profit*, Volume I of *Capital*, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, *State and Revolution*, *On Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, *Culture and the People*, and, if possible, the Russian items by Deborin and Mitin listed above.

It will be understood that, so far as the philosophy is concerned, we are here listing only original sources, which are, of course, the most valuable to deal with. In this field there are as yet very few secondary sources outside of the Russian, and nothing of basic value that is any "easier reading" than the major works noted. It will also be understood that a knowledge of the history of Russia and the U.S.S.R., particularly the social conditions and problems, will further clarify the content of the philosophy. A good general history of Russia is that of Sir

Bernard Pares: *History of Russia*, 4th ed. revised, Knopf, 1944. The best comprehensive sociological treatment of the U.S.S.R. so far is the two volume work of Sidney and Beatrice Webb: *Soviet Communism, A New Civilization*, Scribners, New York, 1937.

The following individual works of philosophic importance are listed in terms of the traditional divisions of philosophy. However, it should be kept in mind that Soviet philosophy is highly integrated, so that works in one category have a real bearing on those in others. Hence, the same work often contains material germane to more than one division. In dealing with these works the candid reader will realize that a philosophy of life is the sort of thing that can never be understood unless it is approached with a certain amount of what might be called sympathetic imagination or vision. If any philosophic work emanating from another culture or period is read primarily with the desire to discover *prima facie* absurdities, exaggerations and inconsistencies, it can easily be made to appear ridiculous because of different language patterns, the general deficiencies of earlier stages in the development of knowledge, and the widespread readiness to take it as a self-evident truth that our own peculiarities are pleasantly humorous, whereas those of others are deplorable perversions. The user of this method may score an easy triumph to his own satisfaction, but he will never discover what gave the philosophy its living importance.

COLLECTED EDITIONS

The most extensive collection (not yet complete) of the works of Marx and Engels is the *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe*, publication of which was begun in Germany and continued in the U.S.S.R. in Russian (*Sochineniia*) as well as in German. There is a two volume *Selected Works* in English. Lenin's *Collected Works* in Russian (*Sobranie Sochinenii*) comprise

more than thirty volumes, with about thirty additional volumes of miscellaneous writings (*Leninskie Sborniki*). The principal English translations are the *Collected Works* (of which seven volumes in ten books have been published to date), the *Selected Works*, comprising twelve volumes (Vol. XI, *Theoretical Principles of Marxism*, is especially rich in philosophical materials), and the Little Lenin Library, made up mostly of shorter pieces, comprising some thirty volumes to date. All works in English are published by International, N. Y., unless otherwise noted.

GENERAL WORLD VIEW· ONTOLOGY, METHODOLOGY, EPISTEMOLOGY

(Works listed in Russian are not yet available in English.)

Lenin, V. I., *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. Dates from 1908. A work of technical and polemical criticism in philosophy. Lenin re-states the essence of the materialist world view, sharply contrasting it to the classic stream of modern idealism going back to Berkeley, and dealing with many 19th century German thinkers, especially Mach and Avenarius. Lenin's immediate target is a group of Russian writers, "would-be Marxists" whose interpretation of "materialism" is based on the positivism or empirio-criticism of Mach and Avenarius, which, Lenin holds, has more in common with traditional idealism than with genuine materialism. Interesting to relate to our contemporary development of philosophic schools like logical positivism and pragmatism. Also, very relevant to recent developments in physics, which, like those Mach and Avenarius were preoccupied with, necessitate drastic revision of preceding concepts of matter, and which even seem to some to have rendered the concept of matter superfluous.

———, *Filosofskie tetradi* (*Philosophical Notebooks*). Not yet translated into English, although there is an abridged German version under the title, *Aus dem philosophischen Nachlass*. Con-

tains Lenin's comments and observations on a wide range of philosophic reading. Especially long notes concerning the work of Hegel in logic and the history of philosophy. Moscow, 1936.

Engels, Friedrich, *Dialectics of Nature*. Especially important on the relation of dialectical materialism to science and scientific method. An illuminating discussion of the laws of materialist dialectics. Contains the important essay, "The Part Played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man," and an introduction by J. B. S. Haldane.

———, *Anti-Duhring*. The full title of this work is, *Herr Eugen Duhring's Revolution in Science*. In form a critique of the philosophical and scientific views of Dühring, a contemporary of Engels. In content, a classic exposition of the Marxian position on basic issues of philosophy, scientific methodology, and historical materialism in the context of Engels' time. "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific" is an extract from this work.

———, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classic German Philosophy* (containing Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach" and other brief pieces).

Stalin, Joseph, *On Dialectical and Historical Materialism*. The best authoritative bird's eye view.

Mitin, M., *Boevye voprosy materialisticheskoi dialektiki* (*Controversial Issues of Materialist Dialectics*). 1936. A collection of essays which throws light on the significant controversies with the "menshevising idealists." Mitin is perhaps the leading figure in contemporary Soviet philosophy.

Science at the Cross Roads, Papers of Soviet Scientists at the International Congress, London, 1931. Some significant materials bearing on the history, methodology and contemporary position of science, with emphasis on the relation of scientific work to the surrounding social environment. Kniga, London.

Plekhanov, George, *Fundamental Problems of Marxism*. Plekhanov is an important source, especially his early works, from which Lenin gained much, and which are widely used in the U.S.S.R.

———, *Essays in the History of Materialism*.

Deborin (and others), *Sovremennye problemy filosofii marxizma* (*Contemporary Problems in the Philosophy of Marxism*). Im-

portant materials bearing on the first critical controversy in the development of Soviet philosophy, that concerning "mechanism." Contains the text of Deborin's decisive paper at the 1929 philosophic conference, the stenographic report of the discussions, Deborin's reply, and the final resolution passed at the conclusion of the meetings. Moscow, 1929.

Stoliarov, A., *Dialekticheskii materializm i mekhanisty: nashi filosofskie raznoglasua* (*Dialectical Materialism and the Mechanists: Our Philosophical Disagreements*). Moscow, 1930. Further materials bearing on the controversy mentioned in the preceding item.

Bazarov, Berman, Lunacharski, Yushkevich, Bogdanov, Gelfond, Suvorov, *Ocherki po filosofii marxizma* (*Essays in the Philosophy of Marxism*). St. Petersburg, 1908. The collection of essays characterized as "would-be" Marxism by Lenin, against which he wrote his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism.*

Pavlov, T. (Dosev, P.), *Teoriia Otrazheniia* (*Theory of Reflection*). Moscow, 1936. An exposition of the Leninist theory of knowledge. This work, while regarded as of some value, was rather severely criticised by Soviet writers.

SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY: POLITICO-ECONOMIC THOUGHT, ETHICS, PHILOSOPHY OF ART

Lenin, V. I., *State and Revolution.* Written just before the revolution of 1917, this book has guided theory and practice on fundamental political issues more than any other single work. All of Lenin's writings are considered of great importance in regard to social and political problems. The following list is a selection of some of his best known productions.

———, *What Is To Be Done?* A survey of political problems written in 1902.

———, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia.* 1899.

———, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism.* 1916.

———, *The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism.* A brief survey, which appears in *Selected Works*, Vol. XI.

Appears also under title "Karl Marx" as written for a Russian encyclopedia, 1914. In *Collected Works*, XVIII.

———, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*. 1918.

———, *"Left Wing" Communism, An Infantile Disorder*. 1920.

———, *"Democracy" and Dictatorship*. A brief but pointed statement of five pages, written in 1918. Appears in *Selected Works*, VII.

———, *Once Again on the Trade Unions: The Present Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin*. Very pertinent in the light of later events. Appears in *Selected Works*, IX.

———, *The Tasks of the Youth Leagues*. Especially significant in regard to ethics and to education. Appears in *Selected Works*, IX. Also published in pamphlet form as *Lenin Speaks to the Youth*.

Stalin, Joseph, *Selected Writings*. Same general content as the following item.

———, *Leninism*. A collection of articles, pamphlets, reports and speeches containing much of his fundamental thought. Many editions have appeared, some in one volume, others in two; later materials are included in the later editions. Also appears as *Selected Writings*. The following list is a selection of outstanding works.

———, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*. A very important collection of articles and speeches from 1913 to 1934 devoted to problems of nationality, race and national minorities in relation to various forms and subdivisions of the state, and to underlying economic, religious and social considerations.

———, *Foundations of Leninism*. The text of lectures delivered at the Sverdlov University in 1924, offering a brief survey of the theory and method of Leninism, and orientation to the basic social and political problems of the early period of the Soviet regime. Appears in pamphlet form as well as in *Leninism*.

———, *The October Revolution*. Stalin's analysis of the revolution of 1917, including a statement of some of his differences with Trotsky. Written, 1918–28.

———, *Problems of Leninism*. A brief survey, including a section

on Trotsky's theory of "permanent revolution," and on "the victory of socialism in a single country." Appears as a pamphlet as well as in *Leninism.* Written, 1926.

———, *Interview with the First American Labor Delegation in Russia, 1927.* Verbatim report of the delegates' questions and Stalin's answers. A revealing interchange. The questions are very similar to what would be asked today. Appears separately and in *Leninism.*

———, *Dizzy with Success.* The famous speech in which Stalin called a halt to excesses in the collectivization program in agriculture in 1930.

———, *Some Questions of Theory.* From the report of Joseph Stalin presented on March 10, 1939 to the Eighteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. A very important statement on the position of the state in relation to the transition from the construction of socialism to the construction of communism in one country. Appears in *Leninism,* and also, together with summaries of the next two items, in *The American Review on the Soviet Union,* Feb.-March, 1942, under the title, "Materials on Recent Developments in the Soviet Theory of the State."

Mandelshtam, L., *Sovety—politicheskaia osnova S.S.S.R.* (*The Soviets—The Political Foundation of the U.S.S.R.*) Moscow, 1940. A brief and typical exposition of the Soviet viewpoint on the following questions: the Soviet state in its relation to the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the approaching transition from socialism to communism, the concept of Soviet democracy.

———, *Uchenie Lenina-Stalina o gosudarstve—Sbornik materialov (Collection of Essays on the Views of Lenin and Stalin Concerning the State).* Voronezh, 1940. 188 pp. The essays are devoted both to historical and contemporary problems.

Marx, Karl, See general comment at the beginning of this chapter. The following list is a selection of significant items.

———, *Capital,* 3 vols. The first volume, the only one completed and published in Marx's life-time, is the most important. Vols. II and III were edited by Engels. *Capital* is a treatise in historical economics. The central problem is to analyze the distinctive

characteristics of the capitalist system, to trace the circumstances of its origin and the principal factors and forces determining its evolution, and to prognosticate the probable conditions of its decline.

———, *Towards the Critique of Political Economy*. A foundation work for *Capital*. A classic statement of the theory of historical materialism occurs at the beginning.

———, *Value, Price and Profit*. Probably the best condensed statement of Marx's views on the labor theory of value.

———, *Poverty of Philosophy*. Not a work on general philosophy, as the title might suggest. A technical critique of the socio-economic views of Proudhon. Originally written in French.

———, *Class Struggles in France*. These essays, and the next two items are good examples of Marx's historical method, that is, the method of historical materialism, applied to concrete social and political situations.

———, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

———, *The Paris Commune*.

Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

———, *German Ideology*. An early and detailed statement of the general theory of historical materialism and a critique of Hegelian and other tendencies of the time. Written 1845–46.

Engels, Friedrich. See general comment at the beginning of this chapter.

Gorky, Maxim, The essay, "On the Good Life," in the volume, *Culture and the People*, International, N. Y., 1939. Important in relation to problems of ethics.

Lenin, V. I., *Religion*. Vol. VII of Little Lenin Library. Contains the important essay, "On the Significance of Militant Materialism."

Bukharin, N., *Historical Materialism*. A sociological exposition, dating from 1922. Considered inadequate by contemporary Soviet philosophers. See chapter above, "Pivotal Controversies in the History of Soviet Philosophy."

Trotsky, L., *The Revolution Betrayed*. This work, dating from 1937, together with the following item, gives Trotsky's inter-

pretation of events and presents his side of the controversy with Stalin.

———, *The Real Situation in Russia.* 1928.

PHILOSOPHY OF ART ESTHETICS.

Lifshitz, Mikhail, *The Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx.* N. Y. Critics Group No. 7, 1938. An essay by one of the leading figures in this field in the Soviet Union today.

Gorky, Maxim, *Culture and the People.* International, N. Y., 1939. Selected essays, written between 1927 and 1935, which throw sharp light on the concept of socialist realism and the Soviet view of the relation between art, politics and morality.

Lenin, V. I., *Essays on Leo Tolstoy.* In Vol. XI, *Selected Works.*

Literature and Marxism: A Controversy by Soviet Critics. N. Y. Critics Group, No. 9, 1938. An excellent collection of essays showing the issues involved in the shift from "vulgar sociology" to "socialist realism" as the basis of literary criticism. Pieces by Lifshitz, Kemenov, Nusinov, Levin, Satz, and Mark Rozental.

Scott, H. G. (ed.), *Problems of Soviet Literature: Reports and Speeches at the First Soviet Writers' Congress, 1934.* The report of Gorky is especially suggestive. Cooperative, Moscow, 1935.

Lenin, V. I., *Party Organization and Party Literature.* N. Y. Dialectics, No. 5. A brief, pointed statement on the issue of freedom in cultural pursuits, written in 1905.

Bolshaia sovietskaia entsiklopediia (*Great Soviet Encyclopedia*): Article, "*Estetika*" ("Esthetics"), vol. 64. Published, 1933.

ENCYCLOPEDIAS, ENCYCLOPEDIC DICTIONARIES

Bolshaia sovietskaia entsiklopediia (*Great Soviet Encyclopedia*). The most comprehensive and authoritative of Soviet reference works. Projected in 65 volumes, not all of which have so far been published. In using the material in this encyclopedia, the year of publication of the particular volume should be carefully noted in relation to the rapidly changing history of Soviet developments so far.

Kratkii filosofskii slovar (*Brief Dictionary of Philosophy*). A pioneering work, being the first dictionary of philosophy from a Marxian or Soviet point of view. Covers the chief schools, figures and concepts in the history of philosophy in the occidental world from pre-Socratic times to the present day. First published, 1939. Since revised.

Politicheskii slovar (*Political Dictionary*). A 670 page work, first published, 1940. Brief entries cover a wide range of subject matter which we would characterize as economic, social and geographical as well as political.

Malaia sovietskaia entsiklopediia (*Abridged Soviet Encyclopedia*), 2nd ed., 1937. A ten-volume work of a general reference nature.

The items in the foregoing list are drawn almost entirely from books and booklets to the exclusion of periodical literature. Our present need is more for a selection of what is really basic than for an exhaustive list of the contemporary output in Soviet philosophy. Also, the number of those who read Russian, while steadily increasing, is still limited. Anyone interested in dealing with Soviet periodical literature will find the greatest concentration of philosophical articles in the journal called *Pod znamenem marxizma* (*Under the Banner of Marxism*). Some will also be found in *Bolshevik*, in the various bulletins and reports of the Academy of Sciences, and in journals devoted to fields of social science. (Philosophy is often referred to as a social science in the U.S.S.R.)

The current output of books can easily be followed in the bibliographical journal *Knizhnaia Letopis* (*Book Chronicle*) usually published every six days for the purpose of listing all books printed in the U.S.S.R. in any language. There is a yearly compilation of these data in volumes called *Ezhegodnik* (*Yearbook*). The American journal, *Philosophic Abstracts*, since its inception in 1939-40, has published summaries in English of a number of current Soviet books and titles of articles in the field of philosophy.

INDEX

INDEX

A priori, attitude of Soviet philosophy towards, 91, 176, 211
Absolute and relative, in art, 131, in ethics, 91 ff.
Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., x, 246, 262
Accident, dialectical materialist theory of, 30
Alexandrov, G. F., 186
American Slavic and East European Review, xi
Antagonisms, between manual and mental labor, 37; between town and country, 37
Aquinas, St. Thomas, 150, 235
Aristotle, 150, 170, 178 ff., 186 ff., 192, 212, 235 ff.; dialectical elements in, 187; Soviet critique of, 238 ff.
Art, absolute and relative in, 131; and labor, 135 ff.; and morality, 124 ff.; and world view, 124 ff.; compared and contrasted with science, 132 ff.; connection with ontology, 122; nationalism and internationalism in Soviet, 139 ff, popular, 232; socialist in the U.S.S.R., 138; Soviet theory of, chap. IV
Asceticism, Lenin on, 103
Avenarius, R., 255
Axelrod, P. B., 214, 215, 220

Bacon, Francis, 150, 206, 211, 235 ff.
Balzac, Honore, 137
Base, economic, of society, 28 ff.
Bazarov, 257
Beauty, in art, 134
Belinski, V. G., 235
Berkeley, Bishop, 234 ff.
Berman, 257
Bogdanov, 257
Bruno, Giordano, 235
Bukharin, N. I, 103, 214, 219 ff., 227, 245
Business cycle, 33 ff.

Campanella, 235
Capital, Marx's method in, 199
Capitalism, 31 ff., law of uneven development of, 38, 192
Capitalist, definition of, 8
Cervantes, 121
Chernishevski, N. G., 235
Change, laws of, 163 ff.
Church, Russian Orthodox, 82 ff.
Cicero, 4
Civil liberties, Soviet concept of, 63 ff.
Class, 7 ff., analysis in literature, 121 ff., and ethics, 87 ff., antagonisms, 14 ff., 21, consciousness and class membership, 7 ff.; loyalty, 15 ff; Marx's reference to six classes, 13, ruling, 18 ff.; working, 8 ff
Class struggle, 7 ff.; and art, 120 ff., and dialectical method, 211, in cultural fields, 15 ff.
Classes in the Soviet Union, 12 ff.
Collective farms, 13; kolkhoz, 50; organization of, 14
Communist Party, 78, 227, 232
Communism, distinguished from socialism, 35 ff.; higher and lower phases of, 77
Conference of Agrarian Marxists (1929), 225
Constitution of the U.S.S.R., and social benefits, 231, on civil liberties, 70, on ethnic rights, 57; on religion, 80; on right to education, 55; on right to work, 53, on socialist property, 13 ff., on women's rights, 60
Contradiction, in dialectical logic, 185
Cooperative organizations in U.S.S.R., 13
Copernicus, N., 202, 206, 235
Crise pléthorique, 34
Criticism and self-criticism, 51
Culture, proletarian, 128; Soviet theory of, 139 ff.
Curriculum in philosophy in U.S.S.R., 234 ff.

Daedalus, 136
D'Annunzio, 104
Death, materialist attitude towards, 100 ff.; Gorky on, 100 ff.
Deborin, A. M., 127, 216 ff.
Deduction and induction in dialectical method, 212
Degrees, higher, in U.S.S.R., 235
Democracy, and economics, 49 ff; and education, 54 ff.; and planning, 208; and political problems, 63 ff., and problems of women, 59 ff.; Athenian, 48, Lenin on, 42 ff, nature of, 47 ff, Soviet or socialist or proletarian, chap II
Democritus, 150, 158, 235, 236
Descartes, R., 235
Dewey, John, 97, 210
Dialectical, meaning of, 159 ff., rules for thinking, 209 ff.
Dialectics, 159 ff., and science, 198 ff., meaning in Plato, 160
Dictatorship of the proletariat, and democracy, chap. II, and totalitarianism, 77; definition of, 44; differentiation from nazi-fascist dictator concept, 44 ff.
Diderot, 235 ff.
Divine right (of kings), in social struggles, 22, opposed to right of revolution, 25
Divorce, 105 ff.; post card, 105
Dogma, Marxian attitude towards, 177, 193
Dostoievsky, F., 121

Education, of ethnic minorities, 55 ff.; right to, 54 ff.; students' stipends in Soviet, 54
Engels, Friedrich, 3, 16, 59, 78, 157, 216, 249 ff.
Epicurus, 235
Esthetics, Soviet theory of, chap. IV, 133
Ethics, absolute and relative in, 91, and classes, 87 ff., and inevitability, 92, and practice, 96; bourgeois and socialist, 89 ff., means and ends in, 94 ff.; Soviet, chap. III
Evolution, 163 ff.

Family, Soviet view of, 105, Maurer on Soviet, 105

Fascism, x, 44 ff., 235; and aristocracy, 75 ff, and classes, 75, and freedom, 74; and the state, 79
Feuerbach, Ludwig, 235, 236
Fichte, Johann Gottlieb, 235
Five Year Plans, 40, 51, 222, 232, in philosophy, 247
Flores, Angel, 119, 129
Forces of production, 5 ff, 17, 28
Form and content, in art, 136 ff.
Formal logic, Soviet critique of, chap. VI
Formalism, in art, 144
Fourier, Francois Marie Charles, 34, 143
Freedom, and fatalism, 94, and planning, 69; capitalist and socialist ideas of, 65 ff., in economic relationships, 23; in teaching and study of philosophy in U.S.S.R., 241 ff.; Lenin on, 66, religious, 80 ff.

Galileo, 206, 235
Gassendi, 235
Gelfond, 257
Gladkov, F., 142
Glass of water theory of sex, 102 ff
Gogol, N., 120, 121
Gorky, Maxim, on art and labor, 135 ff., on death, 100 ff., on humanism, 85 ff, on individualism, 114
Gosplan (State Planning Commission), 247

Hegel, George W. F., 150, 161, 181, 198, 215, 217, 235, 236
Helvetius, 235, 236
Heracleitus, 162, 186, 235
Herzen, A. I., 235
History, direction of movement of, 30 ff.; Marxian theory of (historical materialism) chap. I, of philosophy, Soviet approach to, 237 ff.
Hitler, Adolf, 45, 76
Hobbes, Thomas, 150, 235
Holbach, 235, 236
Humanism, Soviet or socialist, chap III, distinguished from bourgeois, 85 ff.
Hume, David, 235

Icarus, 136
Ideas, abstract, 169
Idealism, dialectical, 161; menshevising, 221 ff., 242

Idols of the Market Place, 160
Indeterminacy, Heisenbergian, 217
Induction and deduction in dialectical method, 212
Individual, and socialism, 113 ff.; role of in history, 30
Individualism, and socialism in ethics, 113, Gorky on, 114
Industrial reserve army, 32
Infinity, 158 ff.
Institute of History, Philosophy and Literature (Moscow), 248
Institute of Philosophy of Academy of Sciences, U S S.R., 240, 246 ff.
Internationalism, and nationalism in Soviet art, 139 ff.

Jefferson, Thomas, 25 ff.; 67

Kant, Immanuel, 150, 234, 235
Karev, 220
Kepler, 206
Kerensky, A., 71
Khayyam, Omar, 142
Kolkhoz, See collective farm
Kollontai, A., 103
Krylenko, N. V., 103
Ku Klux Klan, 155, 189

Laissez-faire, 110, 112, 194, 207, 241, 242
La Mettrie, 235
Language and logic, 181
Law of Negation of the Negation, 175
Law of Strife, Interpenetration and Unity of Opposites, 163 ff., 183 ff.
Law of Transition from Quantity to Quality, 172 ff.
Law of uneven development of capitalism, 38, 192
Laws of materialist dialectics, 163 ff.; 183 ff.
Laws of thought, 183 ff.
Leap in evolution, 174
Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, 234, 235
Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich, 38 ff., on absolute and relative truth, 131, on asceticism, 103; on Bukharin, 219, 250 ff., on democracy, 42 ff.; on proletarian culture, 128, on prostitution, 108, on sex problems, 102 ff., on socialism in one country, 38 ff., on Tolstoy, 129 ff
Levin, F., 127
Lifshitz, Mikhail, 118 ff.
Literature, class struggle in, 120 ff., Soviet theory of, chap. IV
Locke, John, 190, 235
Logic, formal, Soviet critique of, chap. VI
Lavretsky, A., 141
Lunacharsky, 257
Luppol, I., 216, 217

Mach, E., 255
Mandelshtam, L., 259
Marriage, and divorce, 105, freedom of, according to Engels, 59
Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, 248
Marx, Karl, 3, 40, 161, his *Capital*, 199, 249 ff., on art, 127
Materialism, and supernaturalism, 153, 157, dialectical, general theory of, chap V, general meaning of in ontology, 154 ff.; historical, chap. I; mechanistic, 127, 145, rejection of mechanistic, 213 ff., "shame-faced," 157
Matter, 159, and spirit, 156 ff.
Maurer, Rose, xi, 105
Means of production, 8 ff.
Medynsky, Eugene, 62
Menshevism, 222
Metaphysics, attitude of Soviet philosophy towards, 175, 176
Method, dialectical, chap VI, 41, and science, 202 ff., and Soviet policy, 249, nature of, 188 ff.
Method of teaching and study of philosophy in U.S S.R., 236 ff.
Middle Ages, 20, 22
Mill, John Stuart, 155
Mind, 171
Minorities, national, and problems of education, 59
Mitin, M B., 127, 224, 227
Molière, 121
Motion, laws of, 163 ff.
Mussolini, Benito, 45

Nationalism, and internationalism in Soviet art, 139 ff.
Naturalism and formalism in art, 144
Nazism, x, 44 ff., and classes, 75 ff., and aristocracy, 75 ff
Negovski, V. A., research on revival of organisms, 101
Negroes, 58, 198

N.E.P. (New Economic Policy), 39, 226
Newton, Isaac, 202 ff., 235
Nietzsche, Friedrich, 235
Nusinov, I., 121

Ontology, definition of, 158
Optimism and pessimism in art, 141 ff.
Orthodox Church, 82
Owen, Robert, 143

Pares, Sir Bernard, 254
Party system, 46 ff.
Party, Communist, 52
Pavlov, T., 257
Peasantry, 13, role in the Revolution, 39 ff
Pessimism, and optimism in art, 141 ff.
Phaeton, 136
Philosophic Abstracts, 262
Philosophical Review, xi
Plato, 150, 234, 235
Plekhanov, George, 118, 119, 216, 219, and Deborin, 223 ff.
Plessy, case of, U. S. Supreme Court, 198
Pod znamenem marxizma (Under the Banner of Marxism), 12, 227, 262
Priestley, 235
Primitive society, communal organization of, 21
Proletariat, 8 ff., 90; dictatorship of, chap. II
Property, socialist, in means of production, 13
Prostitution, 106 ff., Lenin on, 108
Psychology, Soviet, on social motivation, 99; of the Soviet people, 230
Puritanism, 156
Pushkin, 121
Putschists, 25

Quality, materialist dialectical concept of, 172

Races in the U.S.S.R., 55
Realism, photographic, 144, socialist, chap. IV, Gorky on, 144
Relative and absolute, in art, 131, in ethics, 91 ff.
Relativity, Einsteinian, 217
Religion, position of in U.S.S.R., 80 ff.
Research in philosophy in U.S.S.R., 246 ff.
Revolution, 20, 24; French, 26, 83, Jefferson on, 26; Marx on, 25, morality or right of, 24 ff., 96; Russian, 27
Right to work, 52
Romanticism, revolutionary, 143
Rousseau, Jean Jacques, 235
Rubinstein, S., 99

Sarabianov, 219
Schopenhauer, Arthur, 125
Science and dialectical methodology, 202 ff
Scott, H. G., 261
Serf and slave, 21 ff.
Sex, in the popular arts, 108 ff., Soviet approach to problems of, 102 ff.
Shakespeare, William, 117
Sholokhov, Mikhail, 142
Shostakovich, Dmitri, 69
Slave and serf, 21 ff.
Scholastics, the, 235
Social superstructure, 16 ff, 28 ff.
Socialism, distinguished from communism, 35 ff.; in one country, 38 ff.; transition from capitalism to, 33 ff., utopian, 34, 143
Society, feudal, 22; primitive communal, 21; slave, 21, Soviet theory of (historical materialism), chap. I
Sociology, vulgar, in art criticism, 118 ff.
Socrates, 235
Specialization, and integration, 149 ff., 205 ff.
Spinoza, Benedict, 150, 218, 235, 236
Stalin, Joseph, 20, 25, 38 ff.; on common world culture, 139, on features of communism in one country, 40 ff., use of dialectical method, 200 ff., 210, 225, 251 ff.
State, origin of, 20; theory of, withering away of, 37, 43 ff., under capitalism, 53
State Planning Commission, 247
Sten, 220
Stepanov, I., 214
Stoliarov, A., 257
St. Simon, Henri de, 43
Supernaturalism, 153, 157

Tantalus myth, 136
Telesio, 235
Theory, and practice, 229 ff.; and practice in ethics, 88 ff; definition of, 179

Time, in dialectical method, 184
Timianski, G., 214
Timiriazev, A. K., 214, 220
Toleration, religious, dialectical understanding of, 189
Tolland, 235
Tolstoy, Alexei, 142
Tolstoy, Lev, 121, 129
Totalitarianism, 77 ff.
Trotsky, Leon, 39 ff.
Tufts, J. H., 97
Tyler, Wat, 85

Universe, materialist view of, 151 ff.

Value, economic, general problem of, 10, labor theory of, 10 ff.; surplus, 10 ff.; under socialism, 11 ff.
Values, spiritual, in Soviet ethics, 98 ff
Variash, 270
Vavilov, N. I., 69
Voltaire, 235, 236

Webb, Sydney and Beatrice, 254
Whitman, Walt, 133, 231
Women, economic equality for, 62, Engels on, 59 ff; Maurer on Soviet, 105
Working class, 8 ff.

Yudin, P., 224, 227
Yushkevich, 257

Zetkin, Clara, on conversations with Lenin, 102 ff., 128